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Tories renege on cash for schools

Councils must fund teachers' pay rise

NICHOLAS TIMMINS and JUDITH JUDD

A repeat of last year's uproar over school spending cuts looked inevitable last night, after it became clear that the Government will not fund next year's teachers' pay award.

Instead, the £300m thought to be needed for salary increases will have to be found from the £770m earmarked for education in the local authority settlement announced yesterday by the Secretary of State for the Environment, John Gummer. Teachers' pay would lead to further rises in class sizes and up to 10,000 redundancies.

At the same time, the Government yesterday eased the capping rules on councils.



Under fire: John Gummer has angered teachers

now chiefly controlled by Labour and the Liberal Democrats - to allow them to impose council tax increases of up to 15 per cent next year, in the run-up to the general election. County councils are to be allowed spending increases of at least 3 per cent and metropolitan authorities at least 2 per cent. Those rises could push up the average Band C council tax of £543 by between 10 and 15 per cent. The package has been designed to make it difficult for councils to claim that they cannot pass money earmarked for education directly to schools.

Handling a direct challenge to Labour, Mr Gummer said the new capping regime, announced as part of next year's spending review for local government, would allow "greater flexibility".

"Authorities repeatedly said that they would use such flexibility in a responsible way and would not take this as a licence for a general increase in spending and taxes. The Government will watch with interest how an-

thorities respond. We shall see where their true instincts lie," Mr Gummer said.

But parents and governors who last year campaigned vigorously for the teachers' pay award to be funded centrally, and not by local authorities, said they would continue the fight.

Around £300m of the £770m promised for schools in the Budget will be eaten up by the teachers' pay rise in February, which is expected to be around 3 per cent.

Gillian Shepard, the Secretary of State for Education, last night wrote to the Teachers' Pay Review Body, making it clear that the Government would not fund the award as it has sometimes done in the past.

The remaining £470m of the money announced in the Budget will cover only inflation and rising pupil numbers. The result is that there will, in fact, be no extra money for schools.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, accused ministers of shirking their responsibilities by forcing councils to put up with tax bills.

"We will go into a downward spiral of worsening class sizes and redundancies. How many is difficult to say because we don't know how the local authorities will respond," he said.

Simon Goodenough, chairman of the National Governors' Council, said: "We will be putting very hard for teachers' pay to be funded centrally."

Sir Jeremy Beckett, the Labour chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said yesterday he thought "most authorities will find it difficult not to raise council taxes".

The challenge was recognised, however, by Frank Dobson, Labour's local government spokesman, who settled for a low estimate of the possible council tax increase. He said that, on the Government's figures, "it could rise as much as 5.2 per cent" but that with higher charges for school meals and services such as home helps, the average household was likely to face a £108 increase next year.

Budget projections of future spending pointed to council tax payers having to find an extra £3.5bn over the next three years, he said, roughly equal to 2p on the standard rate of income tax.

It was "Another example of the Government furiously taking away with one hand the highly subsidised things they have given in the other," Classroom class, Page 5

Dear Mr President, May the peace last forever



Show-stopper: President Clinton listening to Catherine Hamill, 9, reading her open letter on the troubles in Northern Ireland Photograph: AP

DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland correspondent

The welcomes for President Bill Clinton in Belfast and Londonderry yesterday turned into the nearest thing Northern Ireland has seen in a celebration of the peace process.

The President was given near-rapturous receptions in Belfast, and especially in Londonderry, with tens of thousands braving cold winds to see him and Hillary Clinton. The visit, the first-ever by a US president to Northern Ireland, surpassed all expectations, with an outpouring of goodwill which must have made Mr Clinton wish the crowds had the vote in America.

In Londonderry, he faced with a sea of US flags and thousands of beaming people who cheered and applauded as he quoted local literary figures Seamus Heaney and Brian Friel. Pride of place was given to SDLP leader John Hume, who rarely strayed from the President's side.

A man in the crowd craned his neck for a better view: it was Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin. Londonderry was clearly intended as a tribute to Mr Hume, but in Belfast, Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams had his moment, getting to shake the Clinton hand for the first time in public.

The President was mobbed on the Falls Road but was warmly received too on the Protestant Shankill, where shopkeepers who got to shake his hand wandered round in a semi-dazed condition, faces shining from their brush with such celebrity.

President Clinton's switching-on of Belfast's Christmas lights was designed to be the centrepiece but, in fact, the real highlight came when two children, one Catholic and one Protestant, were brought forward to read letters they had sent to him.

A ten-year-old Protestant boy, David Sturges, read out: "I think the peace is great because there is no shooting or bombing. It means without worrying about getting shot." But the show was stolen by a fair-haired Catholic girl, 9, Catherine Hamill, whose father was shot dead by loyalists in 1987. Undeterred by a sea of VIPs and a battery of television cameras broadcasting her words to millions, she said: "My first daddy died in the troubles. It was the saddest day of my life. I still think of him. Now it is nice and peaceful. I like having peace and quiet for a change instead of people shooting and killing. My Christmas wish is that peace and love will last in Ireland for ever," she said.

It could have been an awkward, corny moment: instead it was moving, poignant and full of hope. The Clinton visit can easily be dismissed by cynics as nothing more than electioneering: but for thousands yesterday it was something much more than that: a catalyst which brought them out in the cold to acclaim the peace process and the ceasefire which, until yesterday, had gone uncelebrated.

Carey backs marriage and condemns living in sin

ANDREW BROWN
Religious Affairs Correspondent

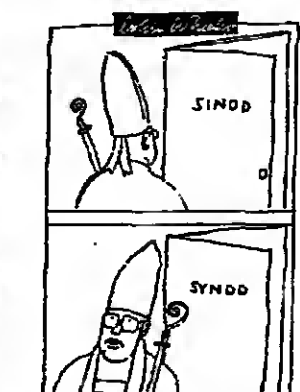
The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, yesterday denounced the Church of England's report on family life which had suggested that the church should drop the phrase "living in sin".

The synod "took note" of the report, something to celebrate, but in the form of a motion which unequivocally reaffirmed the Church's belief in heterosexual marriage, and commended to all Christian families prayer and grace before meals.

With the evangelical party demonstrating its dominance of the new synod, Dr Carey said: "A married man and woman and their children should be the basic building block for family life. Cohabitation is not and cannot be marriage in all but name. Marriage, not cohabitation, is the institution which is at the heart of a good society and let us not be reluctant to say so."

The report, published in June by a sub-committee of the Synod's Board for Social Responsibility, said the phrase "living in sin" should no longer be used. The authors were warned that this phrase would cause trouble, but left it in because they were concerned that some evangelical clergymen were refusing to marry couples living together.

Dr Carey's attack, greeted with prolonged applause, was prefaced by routine praise for the work of the committee. Few other speakers bothered with that. Dr Elaine Storkey, whose husband Alan resigned



held together in a post-modern synthesis which ultimately denies the meaning of contradiction.

Earlier, the chairman of the Board for Social Responsibility, the Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt Rev David Sheppard, had claimed that it would be unfair to publish Alan Storkey's dissenting report because this would imply that the rest of the committee from which he had resigned disagreed with him, which they did not.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Rt Rev Jim Thompson, chairman of the sub-committee which produced the report, asked: "Where is the theology of the report? It has a desperately awful starting point. The report implies that everything is to be

IN BRIEF

Stamp of disapproval
The Post Office is threatening to raise stamp prices and cut jobs after the Government demanded it pay almost £1bn to the Treasury. Page 25

Ashby hits back
MP David Ashby's wife is a "Jekyll and Hyde" character who regularly attacked him, he told a libel trial. Page 5

Medical aid
Medical specialists from Britain and the US joined efforts to save the Greek Premier. Page 12

Today's weather
Most areas will be mild with drizzle. Section Two, page 33

Jet grounded after mid-air shakes

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

A British Airways Boeing 737 which started shaking uncontrollably on a test flight has been grounded indefinitely by accident investigators, who hope it may solve the mystery of two US plane crashes in which a total of 157 people died.

The 737 is being subjected to a major examination by the Air Accident Investigation Branch following the incident on a test flight of the aircraft after an overhaul. The pilot of the BA

737-200 was at about 20,000 feet and travelling at 540mph when he suddenly reported "rapid-roll oscillations". He was able to land safely.

Boeing 737s are the world's most widely used commercial jet aircraft, with more than 2,500 in service. If a major design fault were discovered which needed immediate remedial treatment, it would lead to serious disruption of services. BA has 67 of the planes and said yesterday there had been no problems with its other aircraft.

Neither accident has been explained but investigators suspected a problem with the rudder, causing pilots to lose control.

Boeing, which has had a team working on the problem since the first crash, has made more than 20 modifications to rudder equipment of the 737.

The Air Accident Investigation Branch has been asked by its US counterpart for details of any similar incidents both in Britain and in Europe.

In the US, there have been at least 47 unexplained losses of control on 737s since the Pittsburgh crash, according to Federal Aviation Administration records.

As other countries may not have reported incidents, the Americans are trying to find out about other cases in an effort to find the cause. One safety expert said: "The number of incidents is worrying but the

difficulty is that we have been unable to pinpoint the source of the problem. British Airways last night confirmed that its plane, which had been used for flights out of Gatwick, had been impounded until further notice. A spokesman said: "We have no idea for how long they will need the aircraft."



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news

Presidential plea: 'You must not allow the ship of peace to sink on the rock of old habits and hard grudges'



Reaching for peace: President Clinton shaking hands with Gerry Adams (Photograph: Sygma) Right: Hillary Clinton meets Joyce McCortons, who has lost 12 relatives in the Troubles (Photograph: Pacemaker)

Clinton urges talks to cement peace

DAVID McKITTRICK
Ireland correspondent

President Clinton yesterday steered a middle course between the British government and Irish nationalists in his keynote address in Belfast and Londonderry.

He pleased London by demanding an end to the so-called punishment beatings by paramilitary groups, and calling on organisations such as the IRA to acknowledge that the violence was over for good.

But at the same time he pleased republicans by staging a public handshake on the Falls Road with Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams, and by declaring in his speech: "You must be willing to say those who renounce violence that they are entitled to be part of the democratic process. Those who show courage to break with the past

are entitled to their stake in the future."

Those sentiments will also be welcomed by the Irish government, which has for many months been pressing London to accelerate the pace of the peace process and to move more quickly towards negotiations involving Sinn Féin.

Nationalists were also cheered by the prominence given by the President to John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, during his visit to Londonderry. Mr Hume accompanied Mr Clinton throughout his appearances in the city centre.

There was something too in the visit for Unionists, with Mr Clinton spending time in a local enterprise unit in predominantly Protestant east Belfast, accompanied for part of the time by Peter Robinson, of the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic

Party. The President several times pledged continuing economic support for Northern Ireland, something guaranteed to please all sides.

His words, and his care to stage walkabouts on both the Falls and Shankill Roads, were signs of the White House anxiety to strike a balanced approach in its interventions in the peace process.

But although great care was taken not to offend any section, it is clear that the US administration leans more towards Dublin's view of the peace process than to London's, agreeing with the Irish government that more push is needed towards an all-inclusive process.

He illustrated this when he declared: "Engaging in honest dialogue is not an act of surrender but an act of strength and common sense. Moving

from ceasefire to peace requires dialogue."

This view may colour the attitude of George Mitchell, the President's political ally and close friend, who is to head the international body considering the controversial issue of the decommissioning of paramilitary weaponry.

The success of the visit means that Mr Clinton is likely to take an even closer interest in the process in future. He said in one of his speeches: "You, the vast majority - Protestant and Catholic alike - must not allow the ship of peace to sink on the rock of old habits and hard grudges."

"You must say to those who still want to use violence for political objectives 'You are past, your day is over. Violence has no place at the table of democracy, and no role in the future of this land'."



The President visiting East Belfast Enterprise Park

Photograph: John Voos

Immigrants 'could lose child benefit'

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Child benefit could be denied to thousands of immigrants under the new laws to stop abuses of the British welfare system. Labour's shadow Home Secretary, Jack Straw, warned last night.

The savings on child benefit will amount to £10m a year under the Immigration and Asylum Bill, published yesterday, but Labour said it would go further than intended and hit all immigrants.

The Government admitted it was wide ranging but insisted that it was only intended to stop abuses. It could force the Government to amend the Bill to tighten up its effects.

The Bill also tries to tackle illegal immigrants who gain employment but the Government admits that it could cost business £11.5m a year on extra checks.

Attacking the measure on child benefit as "gratuitous", Mr Straw said it underlined the need for a special committee stage for the Bill, which the Government has refused.

He said Clause 10 of the Bill gives the Government "the power to remove child benefit from anyone classified as an immigrant which can include people who have indefinite leave to



Jack Straw: Child benefit measure 'gratuitous'

remain, the right to vote and the duty to pay tax."

One Government source said: "As drafted the clause allows us to proscripe all immigrants to be excluded from child benefit. The intention is only to exclude those admitted to the UK who said they will have no recourse to public funds."

The Home Office took legal advice before introducing the legislation. Clause 10 is designed to stop overstayers, or Commonwealth citizens allowed extended leave, to claim child benefit. It will clamp down on up to 10,000 immigrants.

Many have lived in Britain by leave for years, but have not been

given status to claim benefit, and on entry signed forms saying they would not make such claims.

Ministers privately confirmed that they were unsure about the legal scope of the Bill but insisted that it was not the intention to catch all immigrants. The issue is certain to become a battleground for the controversial Bill, which is due for a Second Reading on 12 December.

It has already led to accusations of using the "race card" and angry protests, including point-thumping at the Chairman of the Conservative Party, Brian Mawhinney.

Tim Kirkhope, the Home Office minister responsible for immigration, defended the Bill and said it would put Labour on the spot over whether it supported abuse of child benefit claims by immigrants. "This is an extremely important measure and I hope we shall get a move on with it because at the present time, we are under enormous pressure when faced with the numbers of asylum seekers coming to Britain," said Mr Kirkhope.

The Bill is aimed at reducing delays and bogus applications in dealing with asylum, giving the Home Secretary the power by order to designate countries where there is in general no serious risk of persecution.

The ruling was criticised by the AA and the RAC, who warned it could send the wrong message to unscrupulous clammers. "Cowboy clamping is a Nineties growth industry which costs the motorist £150m per year," said the RAC's campaign manager Edmund King. Mr King said the RAC's

Blair cools on single currency

JOHN RENTOUL
Political Correspondent

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, edged further to a more sceptical stance towards the European Union last night, saying "there are considerable doubts about the feasibility" of the 1999 launch date for the single currency.

Rather than monetary union, he said the priorities for a Labour government in Europe would be enlargement of the EU to take in countries in central and eastern Europe, reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and open competition in airlines, energy and telecom-

munications. His comments on the single currency follow doubts cast on the 1999 timetable by former Labour leader Neil Kinnock, European Commissioner, whose views on Europe are close to Mr Blair's.

"France and Germany are determined to press ahead on the Maastricht timetable," Mr Blair told an American and British business audience at a Time magazine dinner. But he reflected a recent shift of emphasis in European debate, which has focused on the practical obstacles, with many economists talking about 2002 as the earliest feasible date, while insisting: "Britain's attitude

should not be to set out to obstruct or to glory in difficulties." Mr Blair stressed that a Labour government would "keep our own options open" while "trying to ensure that the issue is handled constructively".

And his emphasis on enlargement conflicts with Franco-German orthodoxy, which is that closer integration must come before expansion. He pointed out that Britain would hold the EU Presidency in the first half of 1998, and he pledged that "a Labour government will open negotiations with the first group of these countries" as the first priority of its presidency.

He also tempered his pro-Europeanism with a vigorous assertion of the importance of the relationship with the United States, underscored by his meeting President Clinton on Wednesday. He urged the EU-US summit in Madrid this weekend to open talks on the elimination of trade barriers "to create a new Euro-Atlantic community".

Developing the "patriotic" theme of his Brighton conference speech, Mr Blair insisted that devolution of power to a Scottish parliament and "deeper co-operation" between European states were essential to a modern patriotism.

Club opens to Oxbridge women

CLARE GARNER

The long-running battle of the sexes in one of Britain's last remaining bastions of male power is about to come to an end. The ultra-traditional United Oxford and Cambridge University Club in Pall Mall has changed its rules to ensure women gain entry to a club which for 178 years has barred them from even using the front stairs.

While 40 per cent of Oxbridge graduates are female, only a non-voting, associate member status is granted to women. Results of a worldwide postal ballot show members "overwhelmingly" in favour of changing the voting rules which have effectively prevented women achieving full membership.

Of the 3,500 worldwide members, 2,417 voted in the ballot. 2,087 in favour of resolution one and 2,054 in favour of resolution two.

Dr David Butler, the Oxford psephologist and television pollster who led the way for the mass resignation of all but four Oxbridge college heads last February, welcomed the news.

"Now, thank god, it seems to be virtually the end of the story and good news for sane, sensible people. In principle I would be delighted to rejoice."

Among the dissidents were: Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, Chancellor of Oxford, two Vice-Chancellors, the former diplomat Sir Crispin Tickell, the social scientist Lord Dahrendorf, and other academics. Those who chose not to back the women included Lord St John of Fawley, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The Duke of Edinburgh, though kept informed, was not asked for his ballot.

In 1993 members voted 3-1

in favour of accepting women on equal terms but, under the rules operating until this week, this did not constitute a majority. The earliest possible date for another ballot was 1998.

This week's changes mean that the interval between ballots on altering a fundamental qualification for membership has been reduced from five to two years (resolution one), and the majority needed in a postal ballot to approve such an alteration is two-thirds of the members actually voting rather than 50 per cent of all members eligible to vote (resolution two).

Ruling against motorist 'further boost to cowboy clampers'

An Appeal Court ruling yesterday on wheel-clamping on private land could create a "cowboy clamping" charter, motoring groups warned.

In London, three judges rejected a motorist's claim that the clamping demand for a £40 fee to have his car released amounted to blackmail and therefore

cancelled out his admittedly deliberate trespass. The ruling contrasted with a Scottish court decision three years ago that clamping in a private car park amounted to theft and extortion.

The Master of the Rolls, Sir Thomas Bingham, held that the clamping who immobilised David Arthur's Rover in a pri-

vate car park in Truro, Cornwall, had reasonable grounds for demanding payment and was entitled to reinforce his demand by threatening to keep the car clamped until he was paid. Mr Arthur had refused to pay to have his car released and had instead returned later and removed the clamps himself.

The ruling was criticised by the AA and the RAC, who warned it could send the wrong message to unscrupulous clammers. "Cowboy clamping is a Nineties growth industry which costs the motorist £150m per year," said the RAC's campaign manager Edmund King. Mr King said the RAC's

clamping dossier included a house clamped outside a church with the body in the back; clammers who demanded a motorist's gold tooth as payment in Sheffield; and two disabled women in High Wycombe, Bucks, who were clamped after legally parking in disabled bays. An AA spokesman said:

"New government measures to force unscrupulous private wheel clammers out of business, are needed now. Clammers charge as much as they want to release vehicles and they have been known to demand as much as £200 from victims. Many clammers are no more than modern day highwaymen."

However, yesterday's judgment the court ruled that a clamping could not demand an excessive charge, nor could he exact payment by threatening to damage the vehicle or justify detention after the owner had offered to pay up. But none of those situations arose in Mr Arthur's case.

IN BRIEF

Police to fingerprint children of seven

Police in South Wales investigating an arson attack in which a mother and her two daughters died yesterday began a blanket fingerprinting campaign which is to include children as young as seven.

Seven hundred families have been asked by detectives to allow their children to be included in the campaign following the discovery of a fingerprint at the home of Diane Jones, 21, on the Gurnos estate in Mid-Glamorgan. On 13 October, Ms Jones and her two children Shauna, two, and Sara Jane, one, died in a fire started with petrol poured through the frontdoor letterbox.

Ecstasy doubles

The amount of ecstasy seized by police and customs has more than doubled in a year, new Home Office statistics reveal. The number of doses seized in 1994 rose from 300,000 in 1993 to 700,000 in 1994. The number of seizures of ecstasy, which has been implicated in the deaths of two teenagers at nightclubs and parties in recent months, increased over the same period by 50 per cent, to 3,600. Seizures of all drugs rose to a record 108,000 - up 23 per cent.

TV licence rise

Television licence fees will rise from next April by £3.50 to £90 for colour and by £1.50 to £30 for black and white, Ian Sproule, Heritage minister, said in a Commons written reply. After a review in 1993 the Government decided that, for the remaining three years of the current BBC Charter, changes in the licence fee should continue to be set at the inflation level. Current licence fees are £86.50 for colour and £28.50 for black and white.

Kidnap charge

A man, 32, was charged with kidnapping after the disappearance of Natasha Jones, 9, and Louise Dixon, 10, from their homes on the Saffron Lane estate in Leicester for three days. He will appear before magistrates today. The girls were found safe and well by police at an address on the estate on Wednesday.

Man electrocuted

A father-of-six was electrocuted as he was putting up Christmas tree lights at his home, Martin Mojsey's wife, Susan, and two police officers who were nearby tried to revive him but Mr Mojsey, 35, was dead on arrival at hospital. The tragedy happened at the family's home in Bolton, Greater Manchester.

Stamps up 1p

Post Office bosses blamed an increase in the amount the Treasury annually claims for a 1p increase in the price of stamps next year, ending a freeze since late 1993. The demand is for almost £1bn in the next three years - about as much as for the last ten.

Heroic Santa

A Santa Claus foiled a teenager's attempt to steal a toy from his Christmas grotto. Stan Eyrce, 84, tackled the boy he saw taking a £1 plastic car from the Co-Operative department store in Sheffield and held on to him until security guards came to his rescue. Shop managers said he decided against prosecution.

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The name Bishop's Little Finger was rejected because then we'd have had to say which one.
You know, which side, left little finger or right little finger, and you know it just seemed to waffle on a little.



THE SERIOUS BEER WITH THE SILLY NAME.

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My wife beat me up, says Ashby

REBECCA FOWLER

David Ashby, the Tory MP, presented himself as a victim of domestic violence to a libel jury yesterday. He described his wife as "a Jekyll and Hyde" character who derided his impotence.

Mr Ashby, who is suing the *Sunday Times* and Andrew Neil, its former editor, for alleging he is homosexual, emotionally recounted his relationship with Silvana, his Italian wife.

The couple, who met on a skiing holiday and married 30 years ago, separated in 1993. Mr Ashby chokingly said his wife was still "wonderful" but she was

prone to "flip" and subjected him to frequent assaults.

In the course of their rows, said Mr Ashby, 55, he was often reduced to tears and his wife would cuddle him.

Mr Ashby, MP for Leicester North West, denied he had ever retaliated. He dismissed allegations that he threw a wet sponge at Mrs Ashby, 52, when his mother-in-law was staying.

Richard Hartley, QC, for the *Sunday Times*, which denies libel, said in the row that followed Mr Ashby, an ex-rugby player, put his hands around his wife's neck. "I assure you I have never rugby tackled, or bit my wife or anything like that," Mr



David Ashby: Denied wet sponge attack to libel jury



Silvana Ashby: Wife who MP said was prone 'to flip'

Ashby said, "I have been attacked frequently by her." Although Mr Ashby said his

wife was capable of affection, and had even embraced him in court that morning, he also de-

scribed how she taunted him for his inability to have sex with her. "It was very hurtful," Mr Ashby said. "She'd say 'you're not very good in that department, not like other men'."

Mr Ashby claimed his wife had always been jealous of his relationship with their daughter, Alex, 27, who sat with her father's solicitors yesterday.

When Mr Hartley claimed Mr Ashby had confessed to a past brief encounter with a man to his wife, he denied it. But he said his wife had been abusive about his relationship with Dr Clarian Kilduff, 32, his neighbour in Putney, south-west London, with whom he al-

legedly had a homosexual affair. He denied he punched his wife at the flat where they lived.

According to Mr Hartley, Mrs Ashby saw her husband putting his arm around Dr Kilduff through a window. When she forced her way into the flat he allegedly hit her so hard he fell down the stairs.

Mr Ashby denied both allegations. He said his wife got into his flat, started ripping down the wallpaper and was so out of control Dr Kilduff called the police. "It was a nightmare," said Mr Ashby. At one point his wife had been so angry she shouted she was going to join the Liberals. The case continues.

Tranquillity report: England's oases of peace pay price for growth in roads and industry



Picture postcard: The perfect image of peaceful village life that has been 'shattered' over the past 30 years by pollution and urban development Photograph: John Potter

Urban sprawl takes its toll on country life

JAMES CUSICK

The post war idyll of England's peaceful green and pleasant land is fast fading into the history books.

Images of pastoral retreats, horse-style villages disturbed by the rattle of a bicycle and clear skies echoing to nothing more than bird song are under threat.

According to new research by the Council for the Protection of Rural England, oases of peace have shrunk over the past 30 years to only three major areas of rural tranquillity.

In new maps issued by the CPRE, the three large remaining "reservoirs" of tranquillity are in north Devon, the Marches of Shropshire and Herefordshire, and the Pennines.

The parts of England which remain free from urban blight, noise, pollution and overcrowding are estimated to be four times smaller than in the Sixties. Over the past 30 years an area of tranquillity the size of Wales has been lost. The CPRE says industrial development, new roads and increasing traffic have left the countryside "shattered".

The research is the most recent attempt to measure "quality of life" factors once regarded as unquantifiable, but "environmental evaluation" is now acknowledged as important enough for the Department of Transport to carry out a noise and air pollution study.

Tranquil areas are a planning tool developed for the CPRE by the ASH consulting group to re-

place the simple split between rural and urban areas regarded as too narrow.

Tony Burton, the CPRE's senior planner, said: "The built-up areas of England represent 17 per cent, but the disturbed areas represent 50 per cent. It is crucial to acknowledge that development goes far beyond the physical boundaries of brick and concrete."

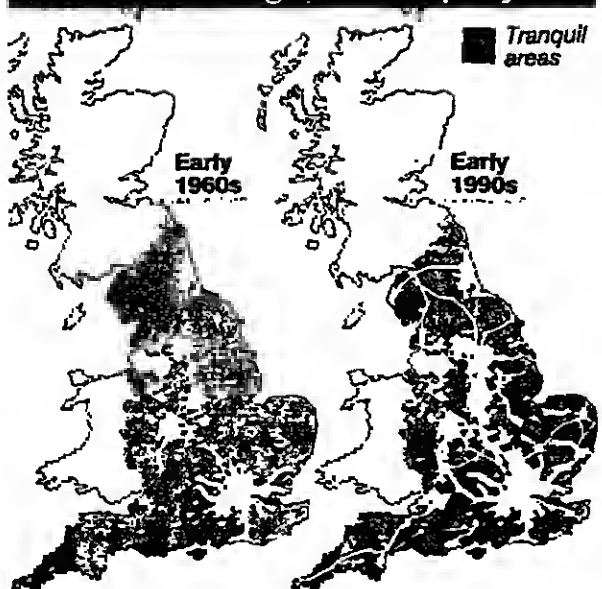
Tranquil areas are defined as places beyond the immediate influence of towns, roads, airports, overhead pylons and mining.

Examining the shrinkage over the past 30 years shows, for example, that in the South-east, the reasonably intact countryside surrounding London in 1960 has completely fragmented. The CPRE blames a four-fold increase in road traffic, air traffic, new developments and the rise of the National Grid. It estimates it requires 150 miles travel from the capital to reach an area of tranquillity.

The South-west, formerly England's most tranquil area, is breaking up fastest: East Anglia is "fragmenting", while the North-east is the least changed since the 1960s.

Jonathan Dimbleby, president of the CPRE, said the erosion of rural peace demanded action. "We are on the brink of losing tranquillity forever across much of England. The message of these maps is that we need an urgent reassessment of priorities if we are to avoid consigning tranquillity to our memories and the history books."

Erosion of England's tranquillity



Regional changes over three decades

	1960s tranquil areas	1990s tranquil areas	Change
East Anglia	72%	64%	-8%
East Midlands	70%	56%	-14%
North East	75%	68%	-7%
North West	67%	55%	-12%
South East	58%	38%	-20%
South West	83%	66%	-17%
West Midlands	70%	55%	-15%
Yorkshire & Humberside	74%	60%	-14%
ENGLAND	70%	56%	-14%

Tranquil areas are measured as ...

- 4km from a power station
- 3km from major motorways, large towns and major industrial areas
- 2km from major trunk roads and the edge of smaller towns
- 1km from busy roads and main line railway lines
- beyond military and civilian airfield noise
- beyond sight of open cast mining

Taking refuge in the quietest corner of all

Each day, one local character in New Radnor leaves home and walks cheerily along the white line in the middle of the main street, all the way to the pub.

This potentially hazardous routine has been going on for years but no-one is remotely surprised he remains unscathed.

If the Welsh Marches is a haven of tranquillity then New Radnor (population 400) can lay claim to being the epicentre of its peaceful existence.

Traffic jams occur just once a year when flocks of sheep are marched down Broad Street on their way for dipping. Adults seeking a lift to nearby Presteigne can usually hop on the school bus - provided there is space.

"When you feel lazy and have a letter to post you simply put it in your own letter box - with the money for a stamp - and the postman will take it for you," said Eric Smith, 54.

Three years ago Mr Smith gave up his £45,000-a-year job as a petroleum chemist manager in London and bought a semi-detached 14th Century mill in New Radnor for £80,000. Now he works as a self-employed carpenter and sells honey.

"We can walk five miles up the valley and see nothing but bunnies and buzzards. The move has taken my family into a time warp," he said. "I've taken an enormous drop in salary but it has not been a sacrifice. There is no way we would ever go back to living in Surrey."

Around 10,000 tourists visit New Radnor each year. Most

Old ways live on in the peaceful haven of New Radnor, writes Richard Smith

are walkers who tramp up Mutton Drive to climb the Wimbles in Radnor Forest, or to see the spectacular falls at Water-Breaks-its-Neck.

The village is still mourning the closure of its bakery six months ago. But the grocery and butcher's store remains, along with a post office, hairdresser's salon - and a paraffin shop.

"It's wonderful. I would never live anywhere else. We are all going out feet first," said John Cooper, 56, who bought The Stores with his wife 15 years ago.

New Radnor has not always had such a tranquil reputation. In 1401, Owain Glyndwr captured and beheaded a garrison of 60 men at the castle, which was later destroyed by Roundheads during the Civil War.

At one time New Radnor boasted its own MP and was the county town of Radnorshire, with a weekly market and five annual fairs.

The railway arrived in 1875 to provide a seaside link with Aberystwyth, but the last train left in 1951 and a bypass has kept traffic at bay since 1979.

Rose Garibo, 39, said: "There is very little vandalism and the crime rate is low, although, having said that, the school was broken into last night and they took all the food from the freezer."

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news

Epidemic fear as flu outbreak gains momentum

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Cases of flu and flu-like illness are sweeping the country in an outbreak that some doctors still fear could be the prelude to a Christmas epidemic.

The latest figures show that there were 139 cases per 100,000 of the population to the end of last week, up from 90 per 100,000 a week earlier. This time last year, there were 30 cases per 100,000.

Central and southern England appear to be bearing the brunt of the illness which is being caused predominantly by the A/Johannesburg strain of the influenza virus.

A regional breakdown of the figures showed an increase from 120 to 161 cases per 100,000 in central England, and 82 to 131 per 100,000 in the South. In the North, the number of cases has more than doubled to 120 per 100,000 population from 58 in the previous week.

Dr Douglas Fleming, director of the Royal College of General Practitioners' flu mon-

itoring bureau in Birmingham, dismissed claims of a flu epidemic, for which the official threshold is about 250 per 100,000. A major epidemic would be 400 cases per 100,000 of the population and above.

"Today's figures are certainly below what we would regard as a national epidemic," Dr Fleming said.

The bureau collates reports from 93 GP practices throughout England and Wales, covering about 700,000 patients. In total, there have been 77,000 new cases of flu and flu-like illness.

The Department of Health is urging the frail and elderly, those suffering from chronic diseases such as diabetes, bronchitis, asthma, kidney failure, and people with suppressed or weakened immune systems due to disease or drug treatment, to get vaccinated.

Residents of nursing homes and other long-stay facilities are also regarded as at high risk. It is estimated that only 50 per cent of those who need the vaccine actually receive it.

Around 6 million units of vaccine are available, and health officials say it will confer 70 to 80 per cent protection against the A/Johannesburg, A/Singapore and B/Beijing strains that are known to be in circulation.

A/Johannesburg, first isolated in the South African city towards the end of last year, is the newest and most problematic strain of this year's viruses. The other strains have been circulating for some time – or are closely related to previous strains – and many people will have some residual immunity.

Major influenza epidemics occur when there are fundamental changes in the genetic structure of the virus producing a strain to which few people have immunity and vaccines cannot protect against.

Previous epidemics occurred in 1957 (Asian), 1968 (Hong Kong), and 1976-1977, which was due to Australian and English strains. The last significant epidemic in Britain was in 1989, when flu-like illness was believed to have been responsible for 19,000 to 25,000 deaths.



Artist's ideal: A marble bust carved by the Italian Antonio Canova in 1817 for his friend, the British diplomat William Hamilton. The 'ideal portrait', in Sotheby's sale of European Works of Art in London next Thursday, is estimated to reach £300-400,000. Photograph: Gerald Lewis

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Ford workers throw down pay gauntlet

BARRY CLEMENT
Labour Editor

Workers at Ford's biggest plant in Dagenham yesterday overwhelmingly rejected a pay offer worth a minimum of 9.25 per cent over two years.

More than 92 per cent of the 9,000 blue-collar workers at the Essex works, who make up nearly half of Ford's British workforce, voted to turn down the deal which gives 4.75 per cent in the first year and 4.5 per cent in the second year or the increase in the Retail Price Index plus 0.5 per cent, which ever is greater.

The news came as 1.5 million local authority employees tabled a claim for a £4.15 minimum wage as part of a package that would add an estimated 6 per cent to the £9bn pay bill.

While public service unions are seeking the increase from next April, it could hold serious implications for the Labour Party if it forms the next government in 18 months time. The party has been warned that if local government workers' aspirations are not met immediately, they will resurface under a Labour administration.

In the motor industry, Ford workers are waiting the outcome of fresh talks at Vauxhall scheduled for next Wednesday – the same day as an overtime ban is due to begin. Vauxhall

management has offered its 9,000 manual workers 3.5 per cent this year and an increase matching the inflation rate next year. Both Ford and Vauxhall have refused to address claims for a reduction in the working week from 39 to 37 hours.

Steve Hart, district officer for the Transport & General Workers Union at Dagenham, said his members were convinced that the 9.25 per cent Ford offer did not compensate them for a considerable improvement in productivity.

"The offer does not meet the claim. If management proposed a 10 per cent increase and there was no concession on hours, they might be prepared to accept. However, management should be aware that their employees are very concerned about working time."

While Dagenham and other small Essex plants have overwhelmingly rejected the proposed settlement as part of a consultation process, other works such as Halewood on Merseyside and Bridgend in South Wales are minded to accept the package.

Union representatives are due to meet on 12 December to assess the mood of the company's 22,000 blue-collar workers. If they opt for a ballot on industrial action, it would take a month to complete and any disruption would therefore not take place until the new year.

Ancient Greeks hold the key to a healthy life

LIZ HUNT

The simple diet followed by Greek peasants is the key to a long and healthy life, and may protect against known health hazards such as smoking and lack of medical care, according to a study.

The Greek variant of the Mediterranean diet – which was first identified as beneficial to health more than 20 years ago – combines the best of current scientific knowledge on healthy eating. But Dr Dimitrios Trichopoulos from the Harvard School of Public Health, who analysed the diet of 182 Greek villagers aged 70 and over, says that it was the "overall dietary pattern" which explained their longevity and general good health.

Their diet included whole-grain bread, potatoes and other cereals. They ate cooked meats and soups, and salads rich in olive oil and accompanied by beans, lentils and vegetables were consumed in sizeable portions. Fresh fruit was a staple.

Milk intake was low but cheese and yogurt was high. Peta cheese was added to salads and vegetable stews.

Meat was regarded as too expensive by most villagers, who preferred fish. According to

the report in the *British Medical Journal*, wine was consumed in moderation and almost always to accompany food. None of the pensioners was a heavy drinker; no man drank more than seven and no woman more than two glasses of wine a day.

During the six-year study 53 people died – 30 (57 per cent) of them men – and 17 (32 per cent) of them smokers. Of the 129 survivors, 61 (47 per cent) were men and 50 (23 per cent) were smokers. Analysis of the individual diets showed that for those who ate more of the components of the traditional Greek diet, there was a 17 per cent reduction in mortality.

Their diet – low in saturated (animal) fats, high in mono-unsaturated fats, high in complex carbohydrates (from grains and legumes) and high in fibre (fruits and vegetables) – was naturally rich in protective antioxidant vitamins A, C, E, beta-carotene, important minerals and other chemicals, like polyphenols and anthocyanines, associated with good health.

This may explain the paradox that people living in rural areas of European Mediterranean countries smoke heavily and have poor access to medical care, but generally survive to a good age.

هكذا من الأصل

Council spending: The Budget offered hope of a little more leeway for local authorities, but they remain under heavy pressure Reduced services predicted as price for education boost

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Higher council tax and reductions in services were predicted yesterday by Frank Dobson, Labour's local government spokesman, as ministers changed council-capping rules in an attempt to ensure that the extra £774m for education actually reaches schools.

as their share of the extra cash for education, plus the £235m intended for the police, the £63m - a 1.1 per cent increase - well below inflation - set for social services and an extra 1.5 per cent, or £17m, for fire services. But in allowing county councils and the new unitary authorities to increase spending by their share of that sum, or 3 per cent - whichever is the greater - and allowing metropolitan authorities and the outer London boroughs a 2 per cent

increase or the extra cost of the fire, police, education and social services spending, ministers have cracked down hard on district council spending. The standard spending assessment - the amount the Government believes councils should spend - has been cut by 2.5 per cent, while they will be capped if spending is increased by more than 0.5 per cent. No extra spending at all has been allowed for highways.

The Department of the Environment said the capping regime reflected ministerial priorities of boosting education and the police during what had been a "very tough" spending round across the rest of government. The settlement could also lead to sharp council tax increases in London, with inner London authorities limited to a 1.5 per cent spending increase but set, along with other councils in the south-east, to lose £150m because of adjustments

designed to take into account regional differences in earnings. These have narrowed between the north and the south during the recession. Government spending figures allow councils overall an increase of 3.3 per cent or £1.4bn on total standard spending - the amount the Government believes they need to spend. But local authorities said yesterday they were already spending £2.1bn above the level the Government specified for

last year, so that the increase does not even bring them up to existing levels of spending. But while John Gummer, the Secretary of State for the Environment, is allowing councils a 3.3 per cent increase in the amount he believes they need to spend, Government grant to local government is rising by only 2.8 per cent. On top of that is the ring-fenced extra allocation of £418m for community care, a recognition of the rising numbers of elderly people.

Martin Pilgrim, Under-Secretary for Finance at the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said last night: "We might just be able to protect education and the social services from further cuts this year. But we will not be able to protect other services." The Local Government Information Unit, a group funded by local authorities and trade unions, predicted the package would lead to council tax rises averaging 7 per cent -

or around £40 on the average £543 council tax for Band C houses in England. The local authority settlement came as Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, announced health authorities' allocations for the coming year. Most will get a real terms increase of 0.5 per cent from the extra £777m being distributed, although two, including Camden and Islington and Manchester, are to face a spending freeze.

Tough decisions mean classes may still get bigger

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Councils will have to choose between squeezing spending on other services and making teachers redundant. Ministers say school spending should rise by 4.5 per cent, compared with an increase of 3.3 per cent in overall spending. Education spending is not ring-fenced, so councillors must decide whether they are prepared to allow larger class sizes or to close old people's homes. The Government's strategy is to divert the anger of parents and governors - who last year campaigned so vigorously against cuts - away from itself and towards local councils.

But Simon Goodenough, chairman of the National Governors' Council, said: "Governors and parents don't want education to be boosted at the expense of other vital services." The full picture for schools will not be clear until next spring, when the teachers' pay award is decided. Government policy is that public sector pay rises must be funded out of efficiency savings. Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, hinted yesterday in a letter to the Teachers' Pay Review Body that she expected councils to find teachers' pay out of the extra £770m announced for schools in the Budget.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union, said the 10,000 teacher redundancies this year could be repeated. "I would expect it to be as last year and I would expect more pressure on class sizes." Local authorities said last night that about £300m would be taken up by the teachers' pay award. A further £300m will be needed to cover inflation for books, equipment and non-teaching staff costs, while the rest will be taken up by a rise in pupil numbers of around 87,000 pupils. That, still, does not take account of the additional costs

councils must pay for children with special educational needs and for fitting seat belts to school coaches. David Blunkett, the shadow Secretary of State for Education, said the Government's proposals meant a reduction in spending per pupil of £41, compared with this year's actual spending. "Gillian Shephard has been trying to make out that education has been a winner in the Budget. With today's piece of the jigsaw unveiled, it is clear she has been a budget loser." Councils already spend £700m above their standard spending assessment, so any extra money for schools will have to be raised through council tax revenue.

Sir Jeremy Beecham, chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said: "The Government appears to be giving us the choice between raising tax locally and taking the blame for that, or not raising it and accepting that services will suffer." The Government's nursery voucher initiative suffered another blow yesterday when Buckinghamshire, the only remaining Tory shire county, declined to take part in next year's first phase. Three Tory London boroughs - Wandsworth, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea - will run trials of the scheme from next April.



Window on the world: Janet Galt and her pupils at Whitehill Infants' school in the hut they call a classroom. Photograph: Andrew Hesson

Pupils taught in 'temporary' 1970s huts

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

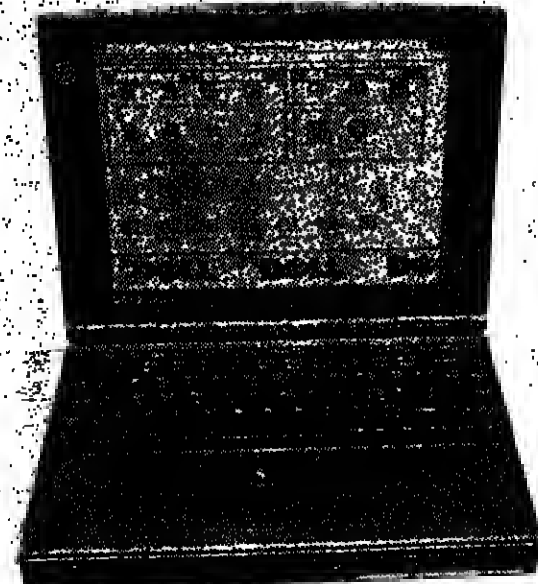
A thought struck Janet Galt one day as she was sniffing the shoes of 52 five-year-old pupils in an attempt to locate some elusive dog-dirt. "Is this what I was trained for?" Mrs Galt's class is taught in temporary accommodation, put up in the 1970s, and to get to

the dining hall or to assembly they have to put on their coats and walk down a public lane popular with dog-walkers. A desperately needed rebuilding programme at Whitehill County Infants School in Crowborough, East Sussex, has just been delayed because of uncertainty over levels of government funding. Meanwhile, children and staff continue to use outside lavatories and meals are eaten in a prefabricated hut erected in the 1940s. Each time pupils are walked from one end of the split site to the other, 15 minutes' teaching time is lost. That adds up to three and a half hours per week in winter, when coats have to be put on, and less in summer - a total of

about four and a half weeks' teaching time a year. This year, plans were drawn up, planning permission was granted and work began on clearing a nearby site. But now uncertainty about levels of government funding has brought a halt to proceedings. Instead of fuelling part of the project from revenue, as planned, the council will now apply for a loan.

Mrs Galt first visited Whitehill when the eldest of her four children, now 26, was about to start school. "When we were shown round, the head looked at my younger children and said they would be in the new school before the little ones arrived," she said. Everyone hopes it will not take another 20 years for the promise to be fulfilled.

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news

Anti-terror bans ruled unlawful by EU judges

STEPHEN WARD
Legal Affairs Correspondent

Britain's Prevention of Terrorism Act, used to exclude suspected Irish terrorists from Britain, is in breach of EU law, the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg ruled yesterday. The Government now faces claims for thousands of pounds compensation from suspected terrorists who argue they were unlawfully excluded and challenges to bans from 36 people currently banned.

John Redwood, a leading figure on the Tory right, said: "The latest judgment underlines the urgent need for the British government to table proposals in Brussels and for the inter-governmental conference to curb the court's powers." He said there were "all too many areas" where decisions made by freely elected parliaments in EU member states were subsequently reversed by "unelected judges in a faraway country".

The Sinn Féin president, Gerry Adams, was excluded until this year, but the Home Office dropped the order after he began a challenge before the Luxembourg court.

Although the Home Office insists its exclusion orders have

all been justifiable, it has over had to demonstrate independent backing for its judgement that a person "is or has been concerned in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism connected with the affairs of Northern Ireland".

Stephen Grosz, solicitor for the former Republican activist John Gallagher, who brought yesterday's case, said there were few safeguards against abuse of exclusion orders.

A spokesman for the Home Office emphasised the Act would remain in force. He said: "We shall consider very carefully the implications of this judgment. But it is clear that it does not question the power to make exclusion orders - it addresses only the procedures involved in making them."

The legal challenge was brought by Mr Gallagher after he had been excluded from Britain as a suspected terrorist. The European Court of Justice declared that the operation of the PTA was a breach of freedom of movement guaranteed by the Treaty of Rome. The case will now go back to the Court of Appeal in London.

Gallagher, 35, was arrested in London in September 1991,

served with an exclusion order and deported to Ireland three days later. He lost his job and his possessions in England.

He had been jailed in Ireland for three years in 1983 for possession of firearms. He later went to London looking for work and had a job between April 1990 and his deportation. He has since lived in Dublin.

After he was expelled, Gallagher wrote to the Home Office insisting on a personal interview with someone nominated by the Home Secretary. The interview took place in the British Embassy in Dublin but the nominee did not identify himself and provided no information about the grounds for Gallagher's exclusion.

He maintained that he had had no involvement whatsoever in political or paramilitary activity at the time of his arrest and challenged the ban. The Court of Appeal referred it to Luxembourg for a guideline ruling. Article 9(1) of the 1964 Directive, which stated that national authorities cannot, except in emergencies, issue exclusion orders to foreign nationals "before a competent authority has given its opinion".

Gallagher's exclusion order was lifted at the end of last year.



Wings of ambition: Juanita takes a perch on Roy Marsden at auditions yesterday for the part of Long John Silver's parrot in *Treasure Island*, which opens at the Mermaid Theatre in the City of London today. The role went to Mac, a big red bird. Photograph: Edward Sykes

Drug dealers 'targeting hospitals'

GLENDIA COOPER

Drug dealers are targeting psychiatric homes where the misuse of illicit drugs by patients is a "growing problem", according to a mental health watchdog.

The chief executive of the Mental Health Act Commission William Bingley said that while visitors appeared to be the main source of supply it was clear drug dealers were going into some hospitals to sell.

At the launch of their sixth biennial report, he added: "There is no common guidance or assistance given to staff about what to do. There is a desperate need for clear policies."

In a recent survey by the Royal College of Nursing, 70 per cent of respondents from both urban and rural areas who worked in in-patient psychiatric services said the misuse of illicit drugs was a problem in their unit. Only half the units had a policy in relation to this.

Cannabis presents the major problem, although the report adds "hard drugs are encountered less frequently but may be more deleterious to mental well-being than cannabis".

Viscountess Runciman, chairman of the commission warned that mixing cannabis with prescribed psychotropic medicines could have "a wide variety of extremely unwelcome effects" on mental health.

The problems associated with the consumption of illicit

drugs have been highlighted from a staff perspective in a recent paper based on findings at Ashworth Hospital, a high-security hospital.

Staff concluded that illicit drugs caused a "general deterioration of mental health or exacerbation of existing problems" with increased conflict between staff and patients and amongst patients themselves.

The commission also warned that there had been "no significant improvement" on the question of bed shortages in acute psychiatric services, and women patients were being treated as a "disadvantaged minority". Many women complained of lack of privacy and harassment by other patients.

Bed shortages were no longer found only in London and urban areas, but all over the country and it was accompanied by a "marked increase in disturbed behaviour" among patients.

The pressure on beds was putting great strain on both resources and staff, the commissioners said and difficulties in delivering acute psychiatric care in many areas had led to "low standards of safety, care and treatment" for some patients.

At the same time, the number of admissions under the Mental Health Act had increased dramatically - by 31 per cent in the period from 1987 to 1993. As a result, patients were being discharged early or shuttled between hospitals.

Banned advert still on Internet

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

The pressure group Friends of the Earth is highlighting the Advertising Standards Authority's inability to regulate the Internet by refusing to remove an advertisement from it.

The advert, which the ASA banned from the cinema in October, shows a mahogany seat overflowing with blood in to a white tiled floor. It highlights the alleged murders of Brazilian Indians by mahogany loggers.

Caroline Crawford, the ASA's director of communications, said yesterday that she would be warning FOE that the October ruling which banned the advert from the cinema also applied to the Internet.

But Tony Juniper, deputy campaigns director of FOE, who claims that 23 Indians were killed by mahogany loggers between 1991 and 1994, said: "I really think a ruling from the ASA is rather a minor consideration given what's happening in the Amazon."

He claimed that the ASA had bowed to complaints over the original advert from the Brazil-

ian government and had not given due weight to the pressure group's evidence of the murders.

FOE's defiance is a challenge that highlights for the first time the ASA's toothlessness over regulation of the Internet. Unlike in the traditional media, it cannot force the removal of advertisements.

Such a problem has emerged only once before, when an Internet user complained earlier this year about an ad for computer products. It was put out by a private individual, who immediately amended it.

Stricter sanctions are in place in the US, where Virgin was fined last week for failing to update an advert listing air fares. But the UK body has yet to agree sanctions in the event of defiance from advertisers, partly because the service providers have not agreed as a group to its regulatory code.

"Discussions are ongoing about providing proper consumer protection for the Internet," Ms Crawford said. "Possible options include the existing sanctions of adverse publicity and referral to the Office of Fair Trading."

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Cash problems trip up firms in railway bids

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
and JOHN RENTOU

A leading bidder for a rail franchise has failed to find the finance to back its bid, while the only passenger company to be privatised so far has been told it must pay "cash in advance" if its trains are to go on operating. The difficulties for the two companies show that private firms seeking to run railways may face insuperable problems just as the Government is increasingly desperate to see concrete results from privatisation.

Yesterday, senior political sources confirmed that Resurgence Railways, which had been given preferred-bidder status to run the InterCity services out of Paddington, has not satisfied the franchising director, Roger Salmon, that its bid has sufficient financial backing.

The choice to run Great Western Railways of Resurgence Railways, led by Mike Jones, a former rail manager, had surprised the industry as it had been selected against competition from the in-house management buyout (MBO) bid. Mr Jones was offering additional services to more towns by splitting eight-coach high-speed trains in two.

Now the MBO team, led by Brian Scott, the current managing director, seems to have a clear run. Because the Government is in such a rush to have the first three franchises tied up before Christmas, Mr Scott is in an extremely good position to extract the maximum amount of subsidy from Mr Salmon.

However, the third bidder, Stagecoach, Britain's largest bus



Train troubles: A diesel engine at Waterman's depot in Crewe, Cheshire. The company is in dispute with BR over £1m of bills. Photograph: Craig Easton

company, is also waiting in the wings. Stagecoach is now the only outside private company with a chance of getting one of the first three lines. It is one of two preferred bidders for South West Trains, the commuter and

regional network out of Waterloo, against an MBO team. The third franchise, for London, Tilbury and Southeast trains, is expected to go to the MBO team. Meanwhile, Waterman Rail-

ways, which bought British Rail's Special Trains division last year, is in dispute with BR. A memo from the British Railways Board director of finance, obtained by Labour's transport spokesman Brian Wilson, says that Water-

man has "not been paying RES [Rail Express Systems] invoices and an amount of approximately £1m is now outstanding". RES is a division of BR which provides Waterman with locomotives, maintenance and

route-planning services. Peter Waterman has been involved in a lengthy dispute with RES alleging it has overcharged him. The memo says RES has "refused to operate any more trains without cash in advance".

Bias against Aids victims 'helping to spread virus'

GLENDIA COOPER

Public health is threatened by discrimination against people with HIV and Aids, according to a new report out today.

Stigma directed against people with HIV/Aids can foster the spread of the virus by making it difficult for individuals to acknowledge their infection and ensure others are protected.

The report by the UK Forum on HIV and Human Rights is launched on World Aids Day, whose theme this year is "Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities". The World Health Organisation estimates that more than 14m adults have HIV or Aids - 8 million men and 6 million women. Every day more than 6,000 people are infected. More than 4 million adults are thought to have died.

The forum says a fresh commitment to human rights is needed if prevention and treatment are to be successful. It found that prejudice remains in many areas, including work, housing, and finance.

A West Midlands Citizens Advice Bureau reported that after a client, who worked in a pub, cut his hand on a broken glass, the landlord and customers were told he was HIV positive and he was dismissed as the landlord "wanted to preserve the trade".

Another client returned to work after two months sick leave to find he was limited in the amount of machinery he could use and was required to wear rubber gloves for all activities. After further sick leave he was told not to return to work but that an alternative position would be found. It never was.

The Disabilities Discrimination Bill, which includes HIV

and Aids, is a "welcome step", the report says, but "does not afford comprehensive protection".

As regards housing, the Aids and Housing Project 1994 found in one study that 70 per cent of those with HIV had been forced to move by neighbours, family and friends and 32 per cent had suffered harassment. "Gareth", who had been rehoused in a council flat, had stones thrown at him in the street, his windows smashed and his flat fire-bombed. He spent £1,500 on security equipment, but by the time the local authority offered him bed and breakfast accommodation his health had deteriorated to such an extent that he had to be visited by a community nurse at least once a day.

As gay men are perceived to be "high risk", financial institutions have discriminated against them by denying them services or offering them at a greater cost, according to a Department of Health report, *Aids and Life Insurance*. No person who is HIV positive may obtain life insurance.

Regarding women, research has tended to focus on HIV transmission from women rather than to women. In addition the specific treatment needs of women with Aids have received short shrift with most clinical research targeted at men.

Ceri Hutton, chairwoman of the UK Forum on HIV and Human Rights, said: "A strong commitment to the human rights of people with HIV is essential. Individuals who are stigmatised may be less likely to be open about their HIV status, they may be less likely to seek the information and treatment they need to maintain their health."

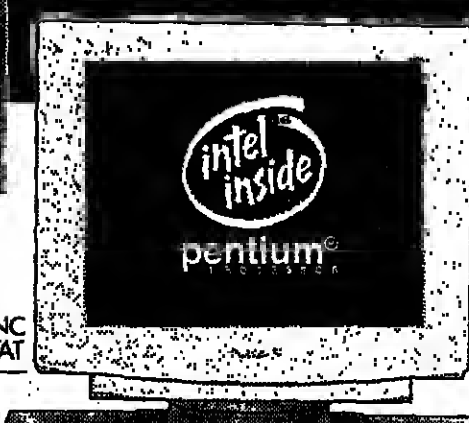
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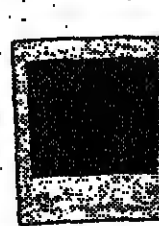
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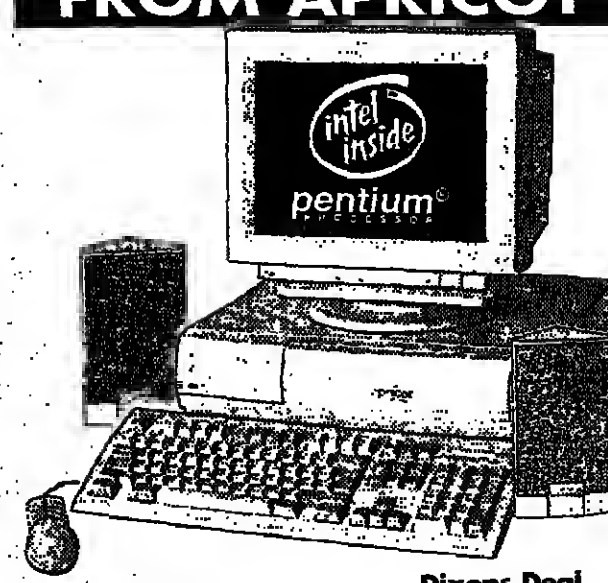
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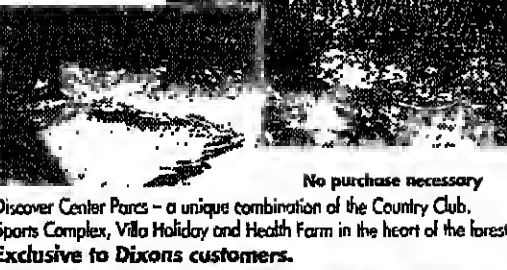
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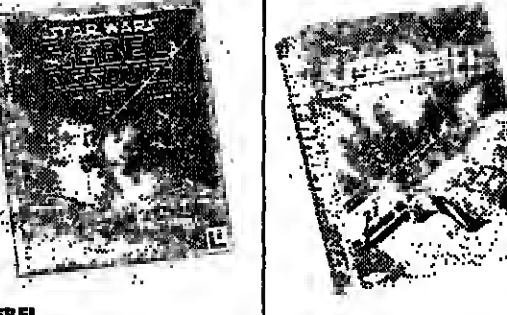
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Water firms 'cheating' over pipe repairs

Many water companies appear to have pocketed cash earmarked for pipe repairs, the main industry watchdog said yesterday.

A report by the regulator, the Office of Water Services (Ofwat), says that leakage reduction targets have not been met even though firms had been given permission to increase prices to pay for them.

Labour immediately called on Ofwat to name the guilty firms, saying companies were "coining money but failing to discharge their responsibilities".

But Ofwat refused to name firms individually - although each company is being told that it must meet the reduction targets set without asking for more money.

The Ofwat report said officials had been looking more closely at companies' leakage forecasts made when the industry was privatised in 1989.

"In many cases reductions planned, and paid for, in the price limits set in 1989 have not been achieved," it said. Ian Byatt, head of Ofwat, said: "We have been looking closely at whether companies achieved the leakage targets which were allowed for in price limits."

"Customers expect more vigorous action by companies in reducing leaks - and better monitoring of the position."

He added: "Customers are also concerned about who pays for leakage reduction. Companies should concentrate on reducing leakage where it is economic to do so, but customers do not expect to see increases in prices as a result."

Frank Dobson, Labour's environment spokesman, said that firms were breaking promises made in 1989 - and attacked the Government for failing to monitor their performance properly.

"This report shows that Ofwat and the Government have fallen down on the job. Neither... appears to have noticed that the companies were failing to deliver on promises made at privatisation," Mr Dobson said.

"It shows that water companies have taken money from customers in exchange for mending leaks without actually mending the leaks."

The new attack came a day after Yorkshire Water caused outrage by announcing that it had made half-year profits of nearly £100m - even though taps across the county are running dry.

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Scottish assembly debate: Forsyth upstages launch of self-rule blueprint with plan to give more local administrative powers

Tories open devolution bidding

JOHN ARLIDGE
Scotland Correspondent

Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, tried to upstage the launch of Labour and the Liberal Democrats' blueprint for a Scottish parliament yesterday when he announced new measures to devolve power to local councils in Scotland and to democratise government advisory groups.

In a St Andrew's Day lecture, Mr Forsyth unveiled plans to transfer powers from the Scottish Office to Scotland's 29 new unitary local authorities. He said he wanted to give councils a single allocation for capital expenditure and allow councillors to set their own spending priorities. He also planned to give authorities more control over housing, bylaws and education. The measures will be introduced next year.

Mr Forsyth also revealed that the Scottish Economic Council, a group of business and union leaders who advise him on how to spend the Scottish Office's £14.5bn annual budget, would in future deliberate more openly to encourage wider public debate about spending plans.

Mr Forsyth's proposals, which came one day after he granted the Commons Scottish Grand Committee of MPs new powers to scrutinise Scottish legislation and question senior ministers in Scotland, are the latest stage of the Government's attack on the devolution plans put forward by Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Ministers hope that by offering Scots administrative devolution, they will blunt the case for legislative devolution. However, opposition MPs also used Scotland's national day to unveil their more radical proposals at a ceremony in



Northern exposure: Michael Forsyth with Tory Party helpers outside the Royal High School building, Edinburgh, yesterday. Photograph: Colin McPherson

Edinburgh. Labour and the Liberal Democrats – backed by church leaders, councillors and community groups – formally launched their final blueprint for the first Scottish parliament in 300 years.

Under the plan, agreed by the Scottish Constitutional Convention, a parliament of 129 members would be established in Edinburgh to run Scotland's "home affairs" – education, health, the law, housing, local

government, transport, planning, industry, the environment, the arts and media, heritage, the national lottery, and sport. Although the parliament would be semi-autonomous and have the power to raise income tax by up to 3p in the pound, Scotland would remain part of the UK, with Westminster determining policies on the economy, defence, foreign affairs, immigration, nationality and social security.

Tony Blair has promised a Scottish assembly within the first year of a Labour government. Labour and the Liberal Democrats welcomed the blueprint as "the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Scotland", in which "unelected patronage will be replaced by real democracy." George Robertson, Labour's Scotland spokesman, and Jim Wallace, the Liberal Democrats' Scottish leader, dismissed Mr Forsyth's reforms as

"totally inadequate to meet the needs of ordinary Scots".

But Mr Forsyth said a Scottish parliament with tax-raising powers would "fuel wage demands and discourage inward investment," he said. The Scottish National Party would use an assembly as a "springboard" to argue for independence. If they voted for legislative devolution, Scots risked "sleepwalking into independence," he warned. The Tories planned to give

"new, real powers" to Scotland's 72 Westminster MPs, councils and civic groups. This was "real devolution for people, not for politicians". Holding out the prospect of further reforms, he said: "These measures are the first wave in a tide of reform which can sweep across the shoreline of government to change the shape of it forever. It can pour new life into our backwaters, to make our government sparkle once again."

Poll backing for cut in numbers of Scots MPs

JOHN RENTOU
Political Correspondent

A significant number of Labour MPs believe a future Labour government would have to cut the number of MPs in Scotland, according to a Harris poll.

The survey would increase the pressure on Tony Blair, the Labour leader, to promise to refer the issue to an independent electoral commission after the general election.

Scotland has 72 MPs – many more in relation to its population than England – and some senior Labour MPs believe that arrangement would be "unsustainable" if a Scottish parliament was set up. They say a Scottish assembly, responsible for Scottish issues, with tax-raising powers, would remove the case for extra Westminster MPs.

A quarter of the 65 Labour MPs interviewed by Harris agreed that "in the event of a Scottish parliament being created with substantive powers, the number of Scottish MPs sitting at Westminster ought to be reduced".

Predictably, none of the Scottish Labour MPs agreed. All 16 MPs who did agree represented English and Welsh seats. All 76 Conservative MPs who were interviewed agreed that Scottish representation should be cut. The poll is to be published in *Parliamentary Monitor* next week.

George Robertson, Labour's Scottish affairs spokesman, this week sent a note to Labour MPs advising them how to defend the party's present position, which

is to maintain the existing over-representation for Scotland at Westminster. Scotland will still need MPs in Parliament to represent its interests in UK economic policy, defence and foreign affairs, the note says.

One MP who received the advice said Mr Robertson's arguments "wouldn't last two minutes in a general election campaign".

The Labour leader last night defended the party's plans for a Scottish parliament.

He mocked Scottish Secretary Michael Forsyth's counter-plans to give the existing Scottish Grand Committee of MPs the power to summon "ministers more senior than Mr Forsyth" – including the Prime Minister. "They do not even begin to close the democratic deficit," he said.

The Government yesterday attempted to meet the clamour for devolved democracy in Wales with a series of proposed changes to the Welsh Grand Committee, writes Patricia Wynn Davies.

The plans were immediately dismissed by opposition parties as doing nothing to change its "talking shop" status.

William Hague, Secretary of State for Wales, said he planned more frequent grand committee meetings, the introduction of question times and, in line with plans for Scotland, a new right for Welsh MPs to question visiting ministers.

There will be no new legislative role for the committee, which currently has the power to consider, but not vote on, government legislation.

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Mackay spoons out an Apostle's view

Deset by criticisms from the Tory benches, that he is making divorce too easy, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, yesterday took refuge in St Mark's gospel as he offered the Family Law Bill for Second Reading.

There, in chapter 10, Jesus reminded the Pharisees that Moses allowed men to "put away" their wives because of their "hardness of heart". Lord Mackay said it showed that the civil legislator had to take account of what actually happened – and there was no doubt that in Britain marriages did break down.

Britain in fact tops the European Union divorce league and a minority of moralists in both Houses of Parliament believe the Bill will extend the nation's lead. It ends "quickie" divorces, substituting a 12-month pause for consideration, but also ends the requirement to prove fault by one partner.

Lord Craigie, President of the Catholic Union of Great Britain, said that if Parliament

decide to make divorce as simple as getting a divorce, it would become a "normal, every-day affair". "Solemn marriage would just become an old-fashioned ceremony."

Why should people take seriously what would be seen as "all that guff" about Till Death Do Part if, Lord Craigie asked, "they know very well that on the mere whim of one or the other they know that a statement could be laid before the courts saying the marriage is falling to pieces?"

The former Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits, suggested young people should be required to undergo some premarital instruction to make sure that at least some pitfalls as well as skills in home-building were thoroughly known beforehand. He did, however, support the Bill. "Sexual adventures before marriage are bound to turn the eventual marriage into an anti-climax since 'stole waters are sweet' and illicit pleasures are always more exciting than legitimate joys," Lord Jakobovits said. "Such marriages are often ruined before they start – by un-sustainable expectations."

Rejecting as "false and irresponsible" the argument that it is not the business of Parliament to try to mend what is broken, he said: "I am not a priest, but I am a member of the House of Lords."

Government had to protect society from any looming peril. While reaffirming his view that "marriage should be life", Lord Mackay said he could see "no moral intellectual or practical merit" in the requirement to make allegations of fault in order to establish marriage breakdown.

Inside Parliament

Stephen Goodwin

Countering a call from the moralists for a two-year cooling off period, he said that while 12 months might not seem long to peers, it was a very long time indeed in the life of a young child living with uncertainty.

"It probably has to be accepted that there are limits to how much longer the period can be made without causing too much hardship – particularly to children. Do we really want to make things harder for children – are things not hard enough for these innocent victims of marriage breakdown?"

Lord Irvine of Lairg, the shadow Lord Chancellor, said Labour would put down amendments to try to remove the 12-month embargo on obtaining a divorce as it was too restrictive. "If the parties are able to make sensible and firm arrangements to protect the interests of the children, we see no merit in holding them to a marriage which is dead and from which they wish to escape."

In further criticism, Lord Irvine said the Bill placed a duty

on the Legal Aid Board to refuse legally aided representation in divorce cases in favour of mediation. Peers were being asked to legislate for a two-tier system – "proper legal representation and advice for those who can pay for it, and the lonely prospect of the mediation room for the rest."

For the Liberal Democrats, Earl Russell said what should be of concern was not the divorce but the underlying breakdown. "Thinking one can prevent that by tightening the divorce laws is a bit like thinking one can prevent death by postponing the funeral." If Parliament really wanted to strengthen marriage – and he did – it should be doing more to tackle questions like the hours of work which prevent so many couples from spending time together, child care and paternity leave.

Supporting the Bill, the Bishop of Worcester, the Rt Rev Philip Goodrich, said that by ending the quickie divorce, the Bill had the potential to make the option for divorce harder.

Prescott 'tried to retract attack on Mandelson'

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Political Correspondent

John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, tried to retract apparently critical comments about one of Tony Blair's most trusted advisers, to be shown on television this month.

In part four of *The Wilderness Years* series, beginning on BBC2 on Sunday, Mr Prescott says that Peter Mandelson MP, Labour's former communications chief but now part of the deputy leader's campaign team, had "extraordinary influence, beyond what he should have exercised", at the time of Mr Prescott's 1988 challenge for the deputy leadership.

Mr Prescott adds that "I am sure Peter would feel that he was carrying out the job he was expected to do", but comments: "If you want to tell Neil [Mandelson] and proposed as often shadow cabinet minister, that he was going to do it, it was a bit of a problem. Well we just said frankly that wasn't true and whether he knew or not is another matter but certainly his office were at it and I don't think it was limited to Peter Mandelson."

In the interview, conducted in August, Mr Prescott recalls Mr Mandelson's advisers as feeling "well the leader feels who'll do it and they play their part and there's no doubt we felt very strongly about that, they

weren't only whispering, they were pretty well shouting what they thought had to be a rubbishing of me... they feared that I might do a lot better than I did."

The following month Mr Prescott's office made three attempts to persuade the producer Denis Bakewell to edit out the references to "personality".

Mr Bakewell said yesterday: "There was some concern expressed by his office afterwards but he wasn't entirely happy with the comments he had made."

"They said they were under the impression that issues of personality weren't going to be included in the programme."

Mr Bakewell said he had made his editing decisions purely on an editorial basis.

In a passage on a television interview with Michael Meacher, then Labour's employment spokesman, Mr Mandelson delivers a doughty defence of spin-doctors. "Nobody was undermining anyone," he said. "What often the press office was doing was saving politicians from themselves, from their own gaffes, and from the messes that they had created."

"When someone goes on television and does something which creates sort of palpable damage to the party and the message we're... trying to get across, it has to be all hands to the pump."

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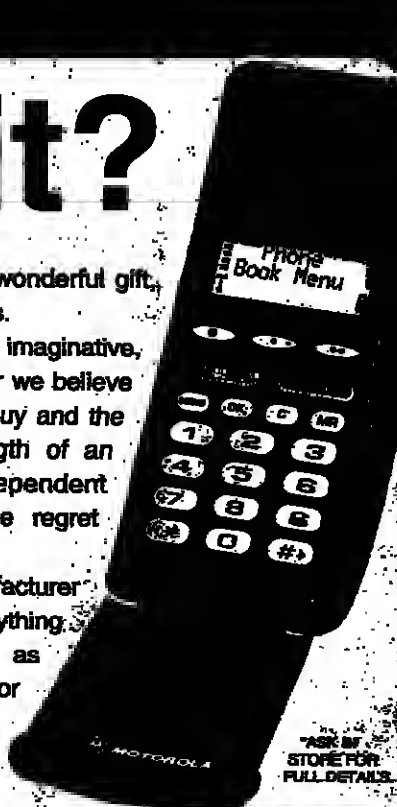
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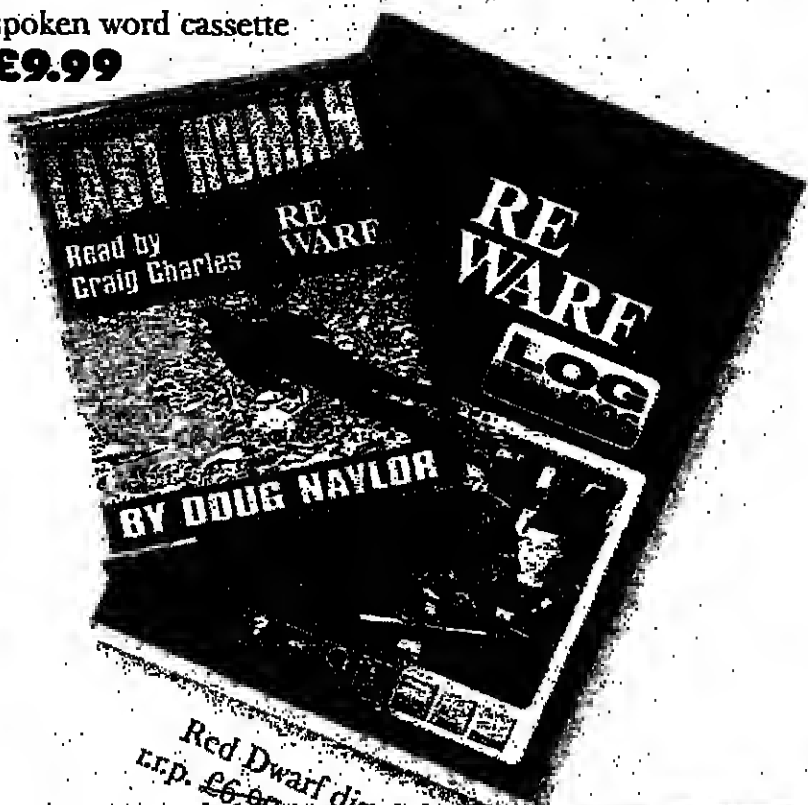
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Changing face of Britain: Gender gap in consumption of cigarettes and alcohol narrows as household affluence increases

Study shows more women work, smoke and drink

JOHN MCKIE

Women are catching up with men in their consumption of cigarettes and alcohol as they increasingly take on the burden of wage earning, according to statistics published yesterday.

For the 12-month period ending March 1995, a survey of British households showed that 28 per cent of men smoked, compared with 26 per cent of women. This contrasts sharply with previous surveys. In 1972, 52 per cent of British males smoked, compared with 41 per cent of women.

The gap in alcohol consumption has also narrowed. The 1994 survey showed that 27 per cent of British adult males were drinking more than the approved limit of 21 units a week, compared with 25 per cent who exceeded the limit in 1984.

The rise in female drinking is more distinct, however. In 1984, 9 per cent of women admitted to drinking more than the maximum safe amount of 14 units a week. By 1994, the figure had risen to 13 per cent.

The rise in the number of

economically active women is well demonstrated. In 1974, 57 per cent of married British women were wage earners and the figure has steadily risen to this year's all-time high of 74 per cent – the same as for single women. This contrasts with a decline in the number of men classed as economically active, from 93 per cent in 1974 to 87 per cent in 1994.

The figures are revealed in the 1994 General Household Survey, issued by the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys. A total of 18,000 people aged 16 and over from 9,700 households were questioned.

Since its inception in 1971, the annual survey has revealed trends about British lifestyles.

Increasing affluence has seen a continuing rise in the acquisition of electronic goods. Last year, 47 per cent of households surveyed owned a compact disc player – an 8 per cent rise on the previous year. There was also a 4 per cent rise, to 77 per cent, in the number of households owning a video recorder, and a 5 per cent rise, to 67 per cent, in the number

that had a microwave oven. But, in spite of this increase in consumer durables, the predicted Nineties boom in home computers has not materialised.

While the number of households with a home computer rose from 9 per cent in 1984 to

21 per cent in 1991, in 1994 only 24 per cent owned a home computer – the same as in 1993.

Various reasons for the slowdown have been put forward – particularly that children's interest of the Eighties has not yet been transferred to their parents.

It is felt, however, that a boom in ownership may come in the next millennium, especially if the Internet further captures the public's imagination.

The survey also showed a slowing down in the increase of single mothers in the Nineties.

While the number of mothers who were single increased from 7 per cent in 1971 to 18 per cent in 1991, for the last two years it has stayed steady at 20 per cent.

One in 10 households now has a lone parent with dependent, or non-dependent, children; 31 per cent of households were couples, married or cohabiting, with no dependent children; 25 per cent were couples with dependent children, and 27 per cent comprised people living alone.

The survey also helped to dispel the myth of a "typical British family" consisting of 2.4 children. British parents in 1994 had an average of 1.8 children, and those in 1971 had 2.0 children. The average is not thought to have been 2.4 since before the Second World War.

Chief scientist in savage attack on UK arms industry

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

Britain's top scientist, the President of the Royal Society, last night launched an unprecedented and outspoken attack on Britain's nuclear weapons programme.

In the prestigious Anniversary Address to the society – Britain's national academy of science – Sir Michael Atiyah described Britain's commitment to nuclear weapons over the past 50 years as "fundamentally mis-

guided, a total waste of resources, and a significant factor in our relative economic decline."

Presidents of the Royal Society never court controversy so the relentless criticism of the Government by Sir Michael, 66, who is internationally renowned as one of the world's foremost mathematicians, is all the more provocative. He condemned the Government's current nuclear policies, saying "there seems to be no long-term vision, only a complacent reliance on

the status quo." Britain's nuclear status, he went on, was "psychologically understandable but economically disastrous".

Sir Michael was equally dismissive of the conventional arms industry and criticised the UK's arms exports. "As a scientist, I cannot by my silence condone a policy which uses the scientific skills of this country to export potential death and destruction to poorer parts of the world, where their scarce resources would be better employed on food and health."

Anti-personnel mines left behind when a war ends represent "an environmental disaster", he continued.

Scientists could contribute to the technical problem of finding new ways of dealing with such legacies of the past, but these mines should be banned in the future, he said. "I regret that our government, while supporting weaker steps, does not appear to be totally behind such a ban."

The peace dividend – the conversion of weapons into

ploughshares – which should have followed the ending of the Cold War showed no signs of appearing, he said. "The Ministry of Defence employs many scientists and engineers who might in other circumstances be creating wealth for the nation," but, Sir Michael continued, "I have failed to detect any conscious policy on the redistribution of scientific resources."

Sir Michael said that scientists had a moral duty to voice their concerns on issues relating to the application of science.

Over the past 50 years since the building of the atomic bomb, there had been close collaboration between science, Government and industry. While that had brought substantial material benefits, it had "been bought at a price and public suspicion is one of the consequences".

Sir Michael went on: "The crucial question for scientists is how to conduct our relations with Government and industry so as to regain the confidence of the public. The

only way is for scientists to speak out openly and freely, to criticise the establishment when necessary, and to demonstrate that independence of thought really is the hallmark of the scientist."

In an interview before he delivered his speech, Sir Michael said that he was expressing his own opinions and not those of the Royal Society which "cannot embark on controversial political matters" because individual Fellows of the Society would have differing views.

He is retiring after five years as president and so feels that in this, his last speech as president, he is freer to express views he has held for many years.

There is no Nobel Prize for mathematics but Sir Michael holds the Fields Medal, which is regarded as being the equivalent, although he remarked yesterday that "it doesn't carry as much money". He is also Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and founder director of the Isaac Newton Institute of Mathematical Sciences.

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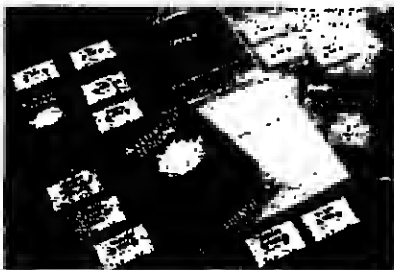
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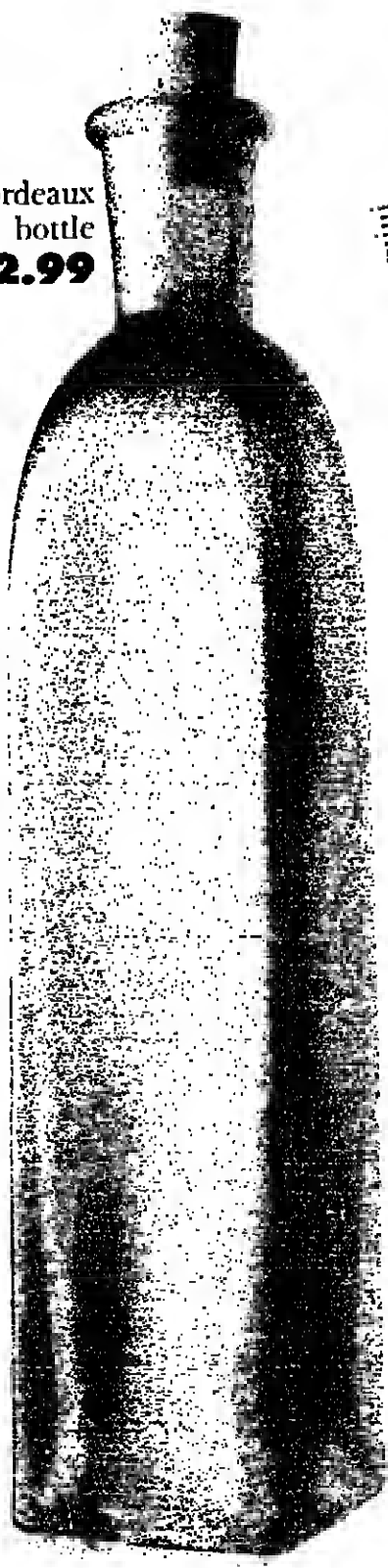
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international

PM on the danger list: Prognosis remains bleak for Greek premier as rival factions in Pasok begin to discuss the succession

Surgeon flies to aid Papandreou

ANDREW GUMBEL
Athens

Specialists arrived in Athens from Britain and the United States yesterday to join the effort to save Andreas Papandreou's life, offering advice and experimental drugs as the Greek Prime Minister remained in critical condition on an artificial respirator and a kidney-dialysis machine.

The Prime Minister, 76, may have been heavily sedated and unable to speak. Nevertheless, he showed a little of his old potentate's touch, sending his personal jet to England to pick up Magdi Yacoub, the British surgeon who did a triple bypass on him at Harefield hospital in 1988, and then flying him home again a few hours later.

Professor Yacoub had just enough time to express satisfaction with the efforts of Mr Papandreou's swelling team of doctors, and to offer an experimental new diuretic to try to re-activate the Prime Minister's failing kidneys. He was joined at Mr Papandreou's bedside by an expert from the Mayo clinic

in Minnesota who brought special nutrients to supplement the ever-weakening patient's intravenous drip feed.

With pessimism growing over Mr Papandreou's chances of recovery, the mood of anxiety at the Onassis Heart Clinic has grown to near-hysterical proportions. Ministers shuffle wordlessly in and out, while in the evenings hundreds of supporters hold candle-lit vigils outside and say prayers over religious relics. Yesterday being Mr Papandreou's saint's day, a large icon of St Andrew took pride of place in the hospital chapel.

The official medical bulletins carried a note of cautious optimism as the Prime Minister's condition appeared to be stabilising. Doctors said they hoped to start weaning him off the respirator today and so cut down the risk of further secondary infection. "He is fighting very strongly and very well," said Gregoris Skalkotas, the Onassis clinic's deputy director.

The prognosis remains bleak, however, with one independent medical authority in Britain saying Mr Papandreou was a

condemned man even if the agony could, in theory, be prolonged for days or even weeks.

Despite the uncertainty, the first signs are emerging that politicians are seriously thinking in terms of a post-Papandreou era. Political sources said the two hostile factions in Mr Papandreou's Pasok party had begun negotiations to find a successor acceptable to both — assuming Mr Papandreou does not name his own dauphin.

The cabinet, meanwhile, approved the 1996 budget, which aims to trim the public deficit in line with guidelines set out by the EU Maastricht treaty.

The government also announced that the acting prime minister, Kostas Tsachalopoulos, would represent Greece at the EU's Madrid summit later this month. Mr Tsachalopoulos is a staunch Papandreou loyalist and may use the occasion to promote himself for the succession.

He is not considered a heavy-weight, however, and is more likely to appear in a caretaker capacity while Pasok sharpens its knives to carve out the future back home.



Silver lining: Yannis Alevritis selling pictures of Andreas Papandreou outside the Onassis clinic yesterday Photograph: Varinka Boseman/Reuters

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Peking slaps curfew on Tibet

TIM MCGIRK
New Delhi

The Chinese authorities yesterday imposed a curfew on the cities of Lhasa and Shigatse to quell unrest among Tibetans angered by Peking's attempts to install a six-year-old boy as the reincarnation of a high Buddhist lama, according to Tibetan exile sources in India.

Tempa Tsering, a spokesman for the government-in-exile of Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, said that despite the curfew, protests by Tibetans erupted in Lhasa, Shigatse and Chamdo to protest against "this latest Chinese affront to the religious sentiments of the Tibetan people".

Chinese security forces in Tibet had been placed on alert, he added.

Using mystical divinations, oracles and dreams in his search, the Dalai Lama announced in May that he had found a young nomad boy, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was the authentic reincarnation of the tenth Panchen Lama.

Although it had been the Tibetan tradition for centuries that the Dalai Lama recognise the Panchen Lama — the country's second highest religious figure — the Chinese authorities denounced the exiled Dalai Lama's choice as "invalid".

Tibetan exile sources claim that the nomad child and his parents were seized and taken to Peking, where they were placed under house arrest.

China denied that the boy chosen by the Dalai Lama was in custody. "He is not missing, nor is he incarcerated," said a foreign ministry spokesman, Shen Guofang.

But he added, "We have no idea of the whereabouts of the soul boy designated by the Dalai Lama."

The last Panchen Lama, who died six years ago, stayed behind in Tibet when the Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959. Although many Tibetans at first denounced him as a Chinese stooge, the Panchen Lama spent the last 12 years of his life under house arrest for denouncing the Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Tibetan exile sources claim the Chinese authorities in Lhasa are planning a series of important Tibetan religious and political figures suspected of harbouring Tibetan nationalist sentiments.

Several senior monks in Shigatse, the traditional seat of the Panchen Lama, are said to have been arrested as "reactionaries" for allegedly collaborating with the Dalai Lama in the hunt for the young child.

It is the exiles' view that China wants to manipulate the selection of the next Panchen Lama to quash the Tibetans' devotion towards the Dalai Lama and his non-violent campaign to regain independence for Tibet.

The Chinese-imposed "soul boy" is the son of two Communist Party functionaries from the Nagchu district, and without the Dalai Lama's blessing few Tibetans are likely to revere him as the true Panchen Lama.

Whistleblower set to put a match to tobacco barons

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Jeffrey Wigand has begun spilling the beans, and America's hitherto impenetrable cigarette manufacturers have begun to tremble. As the Attorney-General of Mississippi asserts, "Mr Wigand's testimony is going to be devastating for the tobacco industry."

This week, after an extraordinary legal tug of war, the 52-year-old former research chief of the Brown & Williamson company answered a subpoena and went to Pascagoula, on the Gulf of Mexico, to give a first deposition in a landmark case brought by Mississippi.

The state wants to recover taxpayers' money spent on treating diseases caused by cigarettes. At first glance Mr Wigand cuts an unlikely figure: the man who may change the course of America's tobacco wars — a biochemist and highly regarded manager in the chemical and drug industries before he joined B&W, a subsidiary of BAT Industries of Britain, in 1989 at a salary of \$300,000 (£200,000). Four years later he was sacked, and today earns

barely \$30,000 teaching science and Japanese at a high school in Louisville, Kentucky. But to the tobacco companies he is the ultimate nightmare: the highest ranking, most strategically placed operative ever to defect to the enemy, the man who knows the secrets.

These are rough legal times for the industry. In Louisiana, a huge class-action suit which theoretically could embrace most of the country's 50 million smokers charges it with concealing the knowledge that smoking was dangerous. Five other states plan to follow Mississippi's example and seek reimbursement of hundreds of millions of Medicaid dollars disbursed to those suffering from smoking-related illnesses.

The federal government, which is trying to regulate tobacco as a drug, is investigating whether in the 1980s the industry breached anti-trust laws by conspiring to stop development of a safer cigarette. In three separate but overlapping battles Mr Wigand is pivotal, with assertions that the companies have known for decades of the harm caused by smoking.

This week in Pascagoula, his

testimony was heard by state and federal lawyers. Although it has been temporarily sealed by a judge, it is expected to be made available for the class-action case. It represents the most dangerous court challenge yet to an industry which boasts it has never paid a cent of damages in a lawsuit. Cancellation by CBS of an interview with Mr Wigand for fear of litigation by B&W demonstrates the industry's power, but this may well prove ephemeral.

Already the transcript has been leaked to the CBS interview, in which he accuses B&W of using Commar, a dangerous and possibly cancer-causing ingredient, to enhance the flavour of pipe tobacco. He also says the company stifled research into safer cigarettes.

Having successfully threatened to sue CBS, the company took legal action against its former executive, claiming that the interview and any future court testimony would breach a confidentiality pledge he gave B&W in 1993. A court in Louisville upheld that, but a judge in Pascagoula overturned it, saying Kentucky law had no standing in Mississippi.

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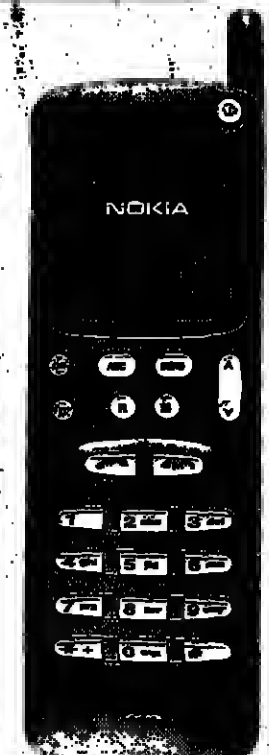
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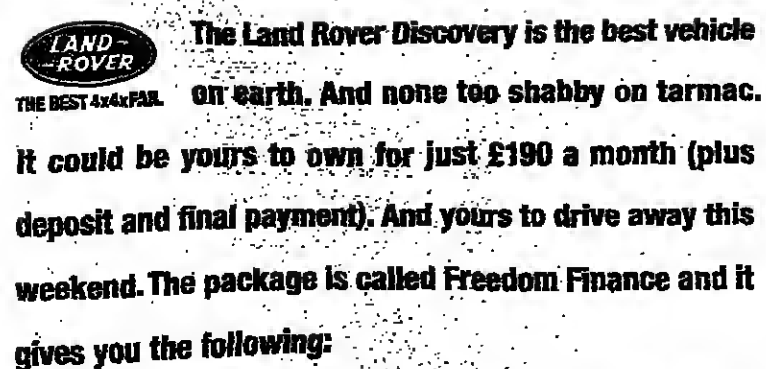
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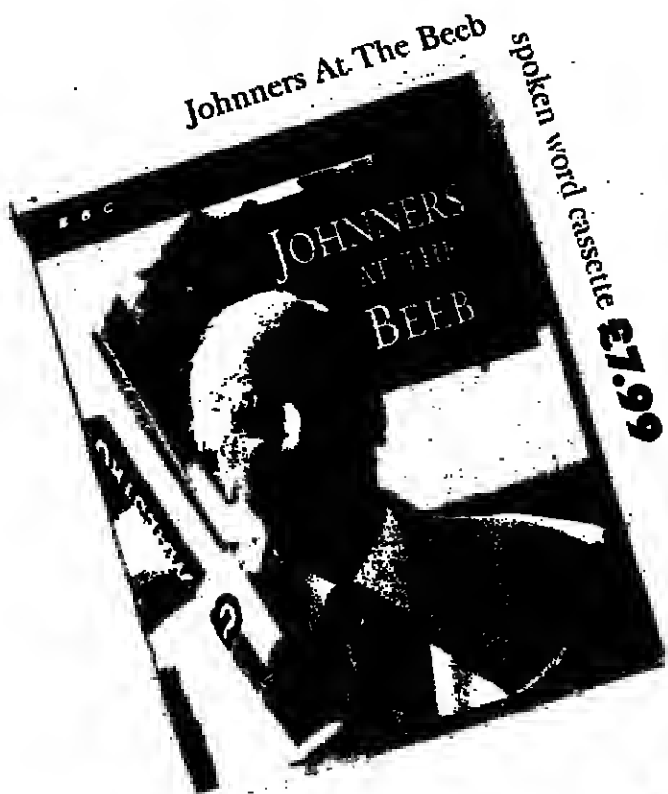
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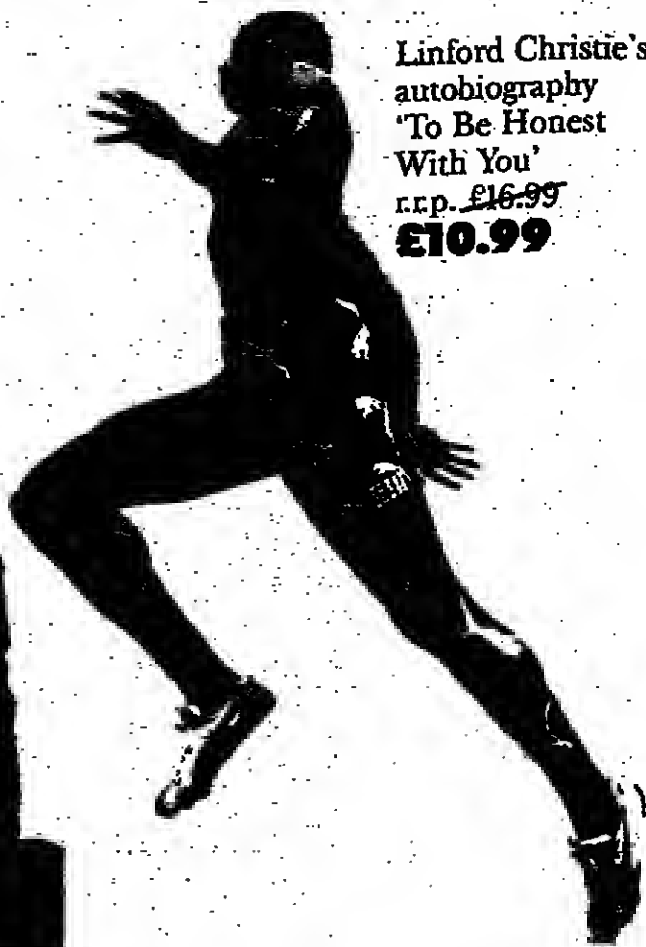
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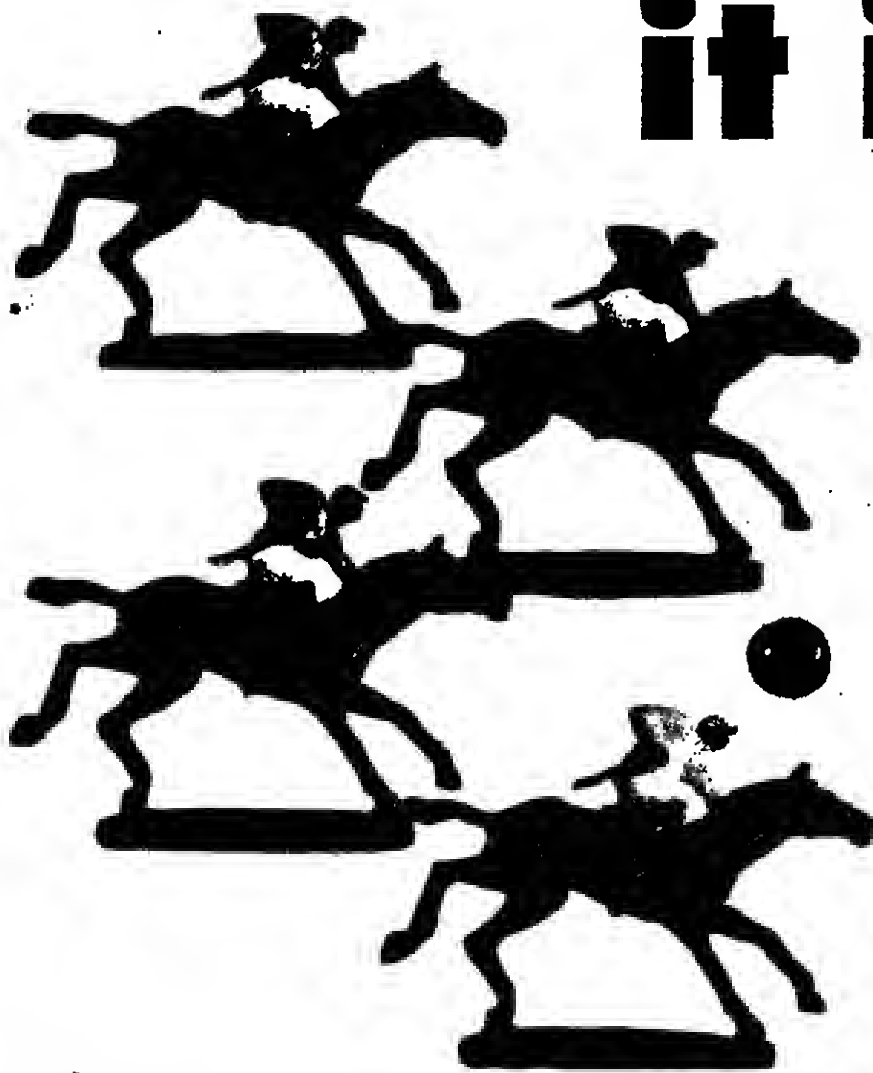
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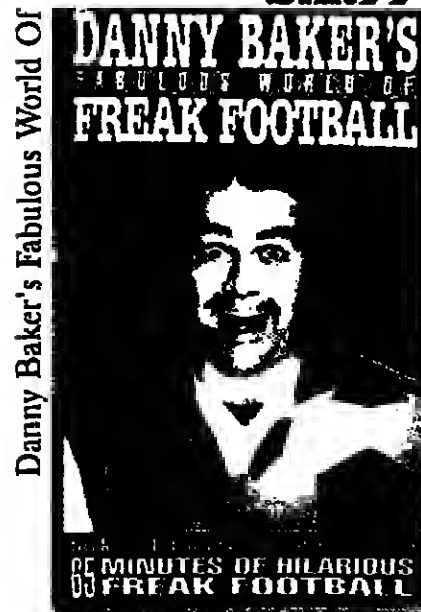


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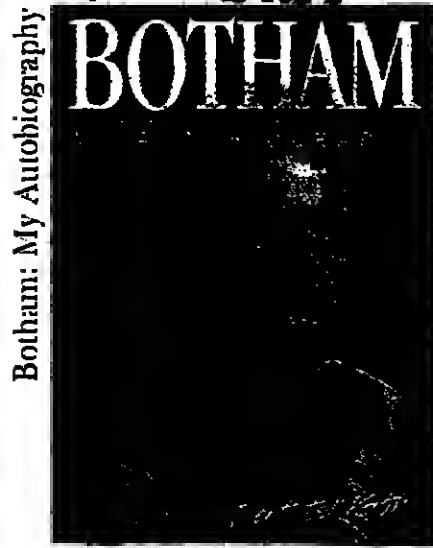


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Balkan peace: Street
Bosnia to
to do more
to calm
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LEPROSY
CAN BE
CURED...

COUNTDOWN

Balkan peace: Strict Dayton timetable for handover of Sarajevo suburbs revealed as Pale stokes fears of a second Beirut

Bosnia told to do more to calm Serb fears

EMMA DALY
Sarajevo

The Bosnian government was yesterday urged to provide greater security guarantees for Serbs living in suburbs of Sarajevo due to revert to government control under the Dayton peace plan. Under the agreement, the rebel Serb army will move out, probably next month, to be replaced by Nato troops and then government officials, prompting many local Serbs to seek new homes for fear of Bosnian reprisals.

The French President, Jacques Chirac, wrote to President Bill Clinton to express concerns about the agreement. Sarajevo is in the area to be held by French troops in the Nato Implementation Force (I-For). A US delegation visiting the city yesterday told government officials they must do more to calm Serb anxieties, warning that the Bosnian Serb leadership in Pale may exploit fears of trouble in an attempt to head off the Nato deployment.

Fears of Bosnian reprisals against Serbs in the suburbs of Ilidza, Grbavica, Iljaci, Vogošća and Hadžići, which are to revert to government rule 45 days after the transfer of authority in Bosnia from the UN to Nato, are being stoked by Pale, which is warning of a "second Beirut". A huge exodus is more likely. Despite government promises of equal treatment for all citizens, local Serbs are anxious about staying once their army has withdrawn.

Under a military annex to the Dayton plan seen by the Independent, the Serbs must withdraw all forces and weapons from the five suburbs within 45 days of the transfer, which is expected to take place around 13 December. I-For will move in after 30 days, and, to ensure an orderly transition, the government will not be allowed to send in its forces until 90 days after the transfer. Soldiers who live locally and wish to stay (without weapons) must register with an I-For post near their homes.

Harić, the Bosnian Prime Minister and an advocate of a multi-ethnic state, dismissed Mr Chirac's complaints. "We have tens of thousands of Serbs living right now in Sarajevo because Sarajevo has been for centuries a multi-ethnic town," he said. "All of us... enjoy the same rights."

His message was reinforced by the Foreign Minister, Muhamed Sacirbey, who signed an agreement yesterday with his Greek counterpart, Carolos Papoulias, opening diplomatic relations between Sarajevo and Athens, which has close ties to the Serbs through the Orthodox church. The ceremony, witnessed by the Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, was a symbol that "Sarajevo belongs to everyone", Mr Sacirbey said.

However, Mirko Pejanovic, one of the two Serbs in Bosnia's collective presidency, urged his government to go further to reassure Serbs in the suburbs, and asked the international community to shore up Serb opinion in the face of Pale's propaganda. "The government is doing a lot, but it should be doing more," he said.

Mr Pejanovic and the Serb Civic Council in Sarajevo, where around 25,000 to 30,000 Serbs live under government control, said officials should offer an amnesty to Serb soldiers, most of whom were conscripts, and prosecute only "war criminals". "Every day the propaganda from Pale fuels the time bomb," he said. "Many of [the Serb men in the five suburbs] were drafted into the army. If they have to leave, their families will go with them."

But Mr Sacirbey said there was no need for an amnesty, because the rights of all civilians were guaranteed, and that included soldiers, once they "take on the role of civilians". He added, however, that in the next few days the government would publish "concrete proposals" on the reintegration to Sarajevo of the Serb-held areas.

According to the Dayton plan, an international police force, organised by the UN, will move into the region to monitor law and order and train local forces. But the force will have no authority to open fire, investigate crimes or make arrests that will be up to the Bosnian police. I-For has the right to use force if the agreement is violated, and the paper does guarantee rights to all citizens.

New York — The UN Security Council decided to end the UN operation in Bosnia on 31 January, Reuters reports. The council also voted to renew its mission in Macedonia for six months and extend its operation in Croatia until 15 January.



Keeping their powder dry: Bosnian Serb soldiers clean a tank in the northern town of Brcko, on the corridor connecting Serb areas with Serbia. Photograph: Reuters

Trauma will haunt an entire generation

JOJO MOYES

More than 90 per cent of children living in the Bosnian city of Mostar are believed to be suffering post-traumatic stress disorder, laying the ground for more conflict as they grow up to be "aggressive risk-takers", a conference will hear today.

Paediatricians and psychiatrists at the Children and Violence Conference at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham will examine issues including video violence, child protection and how children are affected by war.

Professor David Southall, who spent the 14 months up to June in Mostar, is presenting evidence gathered during a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Child Advocacy International project there in which 7,352 children were treated. It found that as well as obvious dangers such as shelling, children suffer damage from the lack of simple facilities such as dental care and glasses.

"I would say 90 per cent of children there are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Only the most serious, with severe behavioural disturbances, were picked up by the survey," he said.

"They display all the classic signs. Some were completely silent, wouldn't talk or work at school, or became highly ag-



CHILDREN OF WAR APPEAL

gressive. There's a whole generation of very damaged children."

One 11-year-old girl's father had died of a heart attack. Her mother was later killed by a shell in front of her. "After this she went to pieces," Professor Southall said. "When we saw her she wasn't talking or doing any work at school. We did a lot

of psychotherapy with her and she's better than she was, but you can't undo that. It will haunt her for the rest of her life. Many children had their glasses deliberately taken off by soldiers and stamped on and had been unable to see properly for years. About 85 per cent of children suffered dental problems. The charities have been campaigning for toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Child Advocacy International is one of four charities working in Bosnia who will benefit from the Independent's Christmas charity appeal. Readers have already contributed £35,722, including £12,747 yesterday alone.

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Global-warming debate: Scientists agree world temperatures are rising but cannot find consensus on whether Man is to blame

Science 'using language of the adman'

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

Official predictions of man-made global warming may have mistaken cause and effect, according to scientists sceptical of a link with fossil-fuel burning.

Global temperatures may be rising naturally, and as a consequence increasing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, rather than man-made production of this greenhouse gas being the cause of global warming and increasing temperatures, according to Jack Barrett, of the department of chemistry at Imperial College in London.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which, as reported in yesterday's *Independent*, has now agreed that man-made global warming is under way, may be putting the cart before the horse, Dr Barrett said. He cast doubt on official predictions that the concentrations of carbon dioxide could double. "I don't believe it can or will happen," he said.

Dr Barrett believes that the oceans will act as a "sink" for the gas, which will dissolve in seawater and thus be cleared from the atmosphere. He said that the predictions by the IPCC of up to a 3.5C rise in temperatures over the next century were "unimpressive, because they come up with numbers which are less than the overall uncertainties in the quantities they are trying to predict".

The criticism of the IPCC was taken up by Richard Lindzen, professor of meteorology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The IPCC produces waffle statements which don't say anything, which nobody can disagree with, he said. Science is resorting in a "very unscientific" manner to the language of the advertising industry, Prof Lindzen maintained. "I think in the long run the IPCC statement will be an embarrassment to the scientific community," he said. By that time, however, he said, the leaders of



Sign of the times: Entrepenes reservoir in Guadalajara province in Spain during this summer's drought. Scientists agreed this week that global warming is a fact

the IPCC would long since have gone into retirement.

The warming of the global climate over the past century has been completely within the range of natural variability, Prof Lindzen said. "The climate is changeable."

The IPCC had got agreement between its computer models and the actual behaviour of the climate only by including the effect of aerosols in the atmosphere, he said. But the panel had included "an arbitrary amount of aerosols", and so it was not surprising that it had obtained the correlation.

Prof Lindzen pointed out

that the major part of the warming took place before 1940, before most of the fossil-fuel burning had taken place and therefore before the major portion of the carbon dioxide had been released into the atmosphere. Between 1940 and 1960 the global climate actually cooled slightly, before warming again to the late 1970s.

Yet since 1979, there has been no net increase in the average global temperature, Prof Lindzen said. "The net trend has been insignificant, but the IPCC would have predicted at least half a degree increase."

Dr Barrett also says there is

no experimental evidence for anything that could be ascribed to man-made effects. But he also takes issue with the fundamental conceptual approach underlying the climate models of the IPCC. The panel, he says, has underestimated the extent to which the oceans would naturally absorb carbon dioxide, and eventually it could be converted to limestone. He also believes that the panel is mistaken about the length of time the gas lingers in the atmosphere. On average, the gas can only remain in the air for about seven years whereas "the IPCC says decades to hundreds of years".

Experts warn fossil fuels must be curbed

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science and Technology
Correspondent

Slowing down the effects of global warming will depend on getting Western countries to stabilise their use of fossil fuels and limiting the use of such fuels by developing countries such as China, say scientists and pressure groups. Their calls follow the latest report by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in Madrid, which said rises in global temperatures exceed natural variation.

Evidence that global warming is under way in earnest has been building up in the past year, amidst a number of notable changes in weather patterns. While Britain revelled in one of the longest, hottest and driest summers on record, other parts of the world suffered.

In the US a heatwave in Chicago caused a number of deaths, especially among the elderly. Pacific Ocean countries endured a record number of typhoons, while the Atlantic spawned hurricanes well into October - the season usually ends in September. Spain suffered a drought. Storms, cyclones, floods and natural disasters are reckoned to be costing insurance companies 14 times more than they were 30 years ago.

A number of countries also saw unusual flora and fauna: hammerhead and thresher sharks were caught in the Channel for only the second time this century, while in Britain birds, insects and plants were found further north than usual.

Global warming is now reckoned to have increased average temperatures worldwide by 0.5C in the past 100 years. But scientists believe this gradual change is causing abrupt changes in weather systems. "Rising temperatures might mean that events like the hurricane which hit Britain in 1987 will happen more frequently," said David Viner, a senior researcher at the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia (UEA). "And as sea levels rise, floods that might

have happened once every 50 or 100 years will be more likely. Most floods are actually caused by surges rather than gradual rises in the sea level."

Now that the IPCC has agreed at this week's meeting that global warming is occurring, scientists are trying to predict the rise in sea levels expected as glaciers melt and the seas expand.

"It's very difficult to predict with any accuracy," said Dr Viner, one of the UEA team which investigated the topic in a 1992 report for the pressure group Greenpeace. "For Britain, you might get a rise in mean sea level of 10cm off East Anglia, yet of 20cm off Northern Ireland because there is also the movement of undersea tectonic plates and localised warming of the sea to take into account."

But slowing down global warming will prove hard, scientists agree. Predictions based on the best models available suggest that mean surface temperatures will rise by between 1C and 3.5C by 2100.

"Governments have to take

on policies to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and oxides of nitrogen, which are all greenhouse gases," said Dr Viner. However, developing countries such as China and India pose a huge problem for Western governments eager to impose cuts in emissions by reducing the use of coal, gas and oil-fuelled power stations and road vehicles. A Greenpeace spokeswoman said: "These countries are saying 'You benefited from industrialisation over the last 100 years - now it's our turn'."

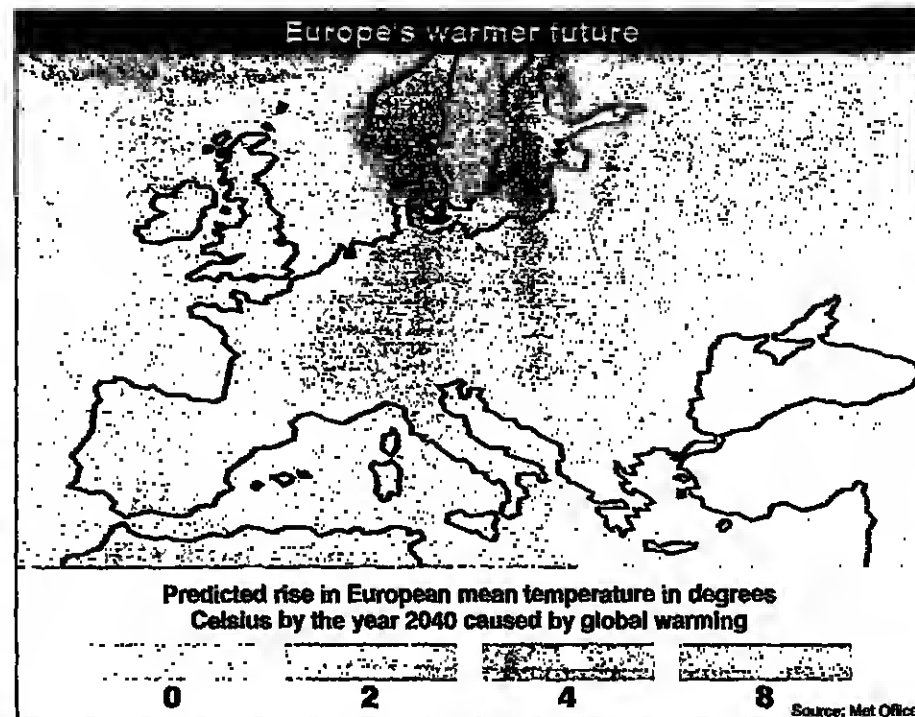
China is understood to be opening an average of two coal-fired power stations every week as it sprints towards a capitalist economy. "China has massive coal reserves and wants to exploit them," said Dr Viner. "Who will pay for it not to?"

Pressure groups for the nuclear lobby have argued for years that nuclear power does not contribute to global warming. However, environmental groups, as well as some Western governments, oppose the spread of nuclear technology.

And as Dr Viner said: "It has its own associated environmental problems."

Western governments aiming to stabilise and then reduce emissions of greenhouse gases may start by putting economic pressure on modes of power generation and transport which are comparatively polluting. For example, aircraft create eight times more pollution than cars, and 22 times more than electric trains, per passenger mile.

Some countries whose economies depend on fossil fuel exports are still fighting a rear-guard action against the suggestion that the rise in global temperatures is due to humans. But Geoff Jenkins, head of the climate prediction programme at the UK Meteorological Office, said: "There's no argument that in the past 100 years global temperatures have risen. The argument is now only how much man has influenced that. But all our simulations now point to humans being the cause of warming. There is natural variability as well. It's just a question of the proportion."

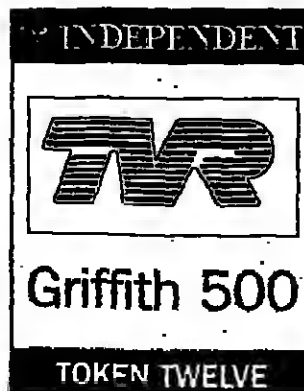


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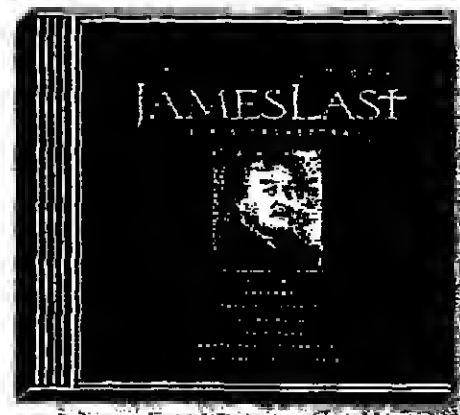
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Inside Abacha's Nigeria: Few of the fruits of Western oil exploration reach the people of the Niger Delta

Shell wins
over village
with cash
and liquorDAVID ORR
Port Harcourt

In the 19th century, explorers and colonisers won over the natives of the Niger Delta with gifts of colourful beads and fine cloth. Today the goodwill of the indigenous communities comes a little more expensive, but not that much more when you consider that Shell is earning more than half a million dollars a day from the region.

All it took for the world's largest oil company to convince the chiefs of the tiny Sangama settlement in southern Nigeria to accept an oil rig in their doorstep was ready cash and hard liquor.

"Two and a half weeks ago when we moved in here, the local people erected a barrier of canoes and palm fronds across the channel so we couldn't tow the rig to the well-head," says Mojeed Alli, Shell's senior drilling engineer on the Searex 12 oil platform. "It was very annoying because we'd discussed everything with the chiefs on the local council. They'd asked for money, community help and drinks and we'd agreed."

Shell has been condemned worldwide — and faces the prospect of a prolonged boycott — because of its involvement in Nigeria and its perceived support for the Nigerian regime. Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Nigerian writer who was hanged despite international protests last month, had consistently campaigned against Shell's presence in his native Ogoniland, a little further north.

The chiefs of Bonny Council had, more precisely, requested 130,000 naira (about £1,000), as-

istance in repairing a dilapidated school building, a dozen bottles of Remy Martin cognac and a dozen bottles of Gordon's Dry Gin. According to Shell, their demands were met. Everything seemed to be going swimmingly. The company even paid a courtesy visit to Sangama's head man, Chief John Jumbo, the day before the huge rig was due to be installed. As a goodwill gift, Shell offered him another 10,000 naira and a bottle of Gordon's Dry Gin. He gratefully accepted.

But when the day came, dozens of canoes were lined up across the channel, blocking it.

"There were about 100 people ahead of us," recalls Mojeed Alli. "If we'd pressed ahead we would have risked killing them. So we took a boat and went to get Chief Jumbo who was in Port Harcourt. It was too late to move the rig into position by the time he'd sorted things out. But they removed the barricade at dawn the following day and we were able to go ahead with the operation." It cost Shell promises of 35 jobs and another 50,000 naira to clinch the deal.

"In he honest, we're just paying them to work at home, cleaning up the village or whatever," admits Mojeed Alli. "We have a full complement of about 100 expatriates and Nigerians on the rig. It would be too dangerous to have any locals here. Anyway, the rig will be moved to another location in a couple of months."

From a Shell helicopter, Sangama can be seen as a struggle of small buildings and huts nestled amid the marshy wastes of the Niger Delta.



Pipedreams: Oil lines snake through a Delta village. Wealth from the oil industry largely bypasses local people

Photograph: Tim Lamborn

Fishing peoples have lived in the Niger Delta for centuries, their settlements perched on the edge of snaking rivers and creeks of brackish, brown water. The region's inhabitants would have lived the same undisturbed lives as their forefathers had not oil been discovered beneath the ground nearly four decades ago.

The advent of the oil industry has brought little real wealth to villages such as Sangama. Nor has it brought any jobs. What money has been paid out to the chiefs by way of inducement or compensation rarely reaches the ordinary people.

"A few chiefs use the money they get to develop their communities," says an oil worker on Searex 12 as a fisherman pad-

dled his dug-out canoe in the channel below. "But a lot of the chiefs keep the money for themselves. Though they always buy a cow or a goat which they sacrifice to appease the water gods."

Whether or not Shell feels capable of satisfying the local gods, it is going all-out to placate the Delta's human inhabitants. In recent years the Anglo-Dutch conglomerate has launched a major community aid programme in order to win local acceptance.

This programme — currently worth more than \$20m per annum — has been given new impetus by the execution of Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists. His environmental and political campaign in the Ogo-

ni region resulted in economic defeat for Shell, forcing it to pull out of Ogoniland. Determined that this should not happen again, Shell has put its public relations machine into overdrive.

"We are building classroom blocks, paying science teachers and offering scholarships," explains Precious Omuoku, public affairs manager of Shell's eastern division in Nigeria. "We are also investing in health and agriculture."

In the village of Aminigboko, a marble plaque proclaims that Shell has funded a classroom block at the local secondary school. It is one of 20 blocks they now erect per year.

"Shell does help the community and we're grateful for that because the government

isn't doing much to provide facilities," says one teacher. "But the company doesn't give much employment. We have more than 1,000 pupils but I know of only one whose parents are employed by Shell."

Aminigboko also boasts a new community hospital, one of 11 which Shell has built in Rivers State. It is well maintained and fully staffed.

"We work closely with Shell," says the village chief, Denton Agbala. "They put more money into this community than they did in Ogoniland. We are grateful, but then we're simply laymen. We accept what they give us. But we don't know how much profit they're making from the oil under our land."

About 14 per cent of Shell's

global oil production comes from the Niger Delta: nearly one million barrels a day. Operating as a joint venture partner with the Nigerian government and two other European oil companies, Shell receives a share of some 70 cents per barrel. For every \$16 barrel of oil sold, the Nigerian government gets more than \$11 by way of taxes and royalties.

How much of this profit is contributed by the oil wells around villages such as Sangama and Aminigboko is difficult to compute. An infinitesimal percentage of total production would afford untold wealth in such subsistence communities.

Local inhabitants would like a share of the revenue, or at least some jobs in the industry.

IN BRIEF

Justice at last for
Jews' rescuer

St Gallen — A Swiss court cleared the name of a police chief convicted 35 years ago of falsifying documents to rescue up to 3,000 Jews from the Nazis. Jews saved by Paul Gruening, who died a broken man aged 80 in 1972, hailed the verdict by the court here as a victory over racism and intolerance.

"The first lesson is not to be racist or judge people by their origin but to judge them instead," as Gruening did, for what they are," said Harry Weinreb, 74, saved by Gruening in 1938. When he fled from German-annexed Austria. The court president, Werner Baldegger, delivering the verdict in the room where Gruening was tried in 1940, said the police chief had acted as an "emergency helper" when he falsified papers to enable refugees to find sanctuary.

Challenge taken up

Montreal — The Canadian government indicated it would contest a \$30m (£33m) libel suit filed by the former prime minister. Brian Mulroney over allegations that he was involved in kickbacks relating to a \$1.8bn purchase of aircraft. The Justice Department filed a document, showing officials named by Mr. Mulroney in the suit intended to appear in court to defend against the action. Mr. Mulroney claims he was libelled in a letter sent by the government to Swiss authorities asking for help investigating possible influence-peddling in the purchase by Air Canada of 34 aircraft from Airbus Industrie in 1988.

Sentence reduced

Warsaw — The son of the outgoing Polish President Lech Walesa had his two-year sentence for drink-driving reduced to a 21-month suspended term by a Gdansk court. Przemyslaw Walesa, 21, was placed on probation for four years. In April a lower court convicted him of crashing into a van while driving drunk in November 1993. The van driver was hospitalized. The President's son was also convicted of insulting policemen who arrested him after the accident, and fined 5,000 zoty (£1,300).

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Dame Shirley: the pressure mounts

Her rule over Westminster council ended in 1991, but the fall-out continues. Chris Blackhurst looks at the latest allegations

For a period of time in the late Eighties, there was something magnificently awesome about Dame Shirley Porter.

At times, a mirror-image of her more famous central government leader just up the road in Downing Street, Porter, the Conservative head of Westminster City Council was an all-powerful, all-consuming figure.

Tough, hard, rich, she exuded a "can do, will do" image that left less ideologically committed colleagues and opponents trailing in her wake. Strident and straight-talking, she was a terrifying prospect.

Served by a loyal band of followers, Porter ruled over Westminster in a manner the like of which has rarely been seen in a British town hall. New York, maybe, Chicago certainly – but not this country.

Much of what she did was good. Sifting through the mire of Westminster, the borough of Westminster is what the Americans call, euphemistically, a "mixed neighbourhood".

From Victoria in the south to Paddington in the north, the area encompasses some of the richest properties in London and some of the poorest.

While no other place can match it for the power and influence of some of its more illustrious residents, Westminster also suffers from appalling deprivations. As a result, it is a highly strung political melting-pot, full of activists from both sides of the spectrum keen to impress their masters in the Commons.

With a fierce drive and energy, Porter went to work. Westminster applied for and received numerous grants; bureaucracy was pared, the council tax was made

among the lowest in Britain, the streets were cleaned.

Westminster, with its new-found dynamism and energy, was held up as an example of what others could achieve.

While they dithered and squandered, Porter carved her own triumphalist way, even, controversially, ridding the council of its cemeteries for a symbolic £1.

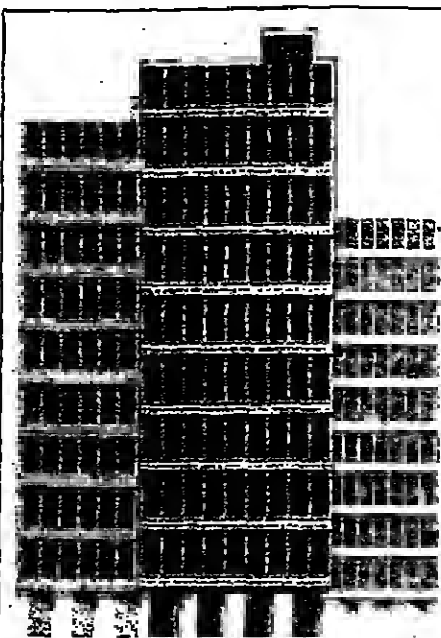
Now all that achievement has gone out of the window. Porter is at risk of being remembered for all the bad things: presiding over a council which embarked on a policy of political and social engineering, for allegedly supplanting social need with political ambition, for phrases that have a creepy, Orwellian feel: "designated sales", "building stable communities", and her very own, innocuous-sounding but actually dominant, strategic inner cabinet, the "chairmen's group".

Just how much and will stick against Porter will not be known until the publication of the final report of the district auditor, John Magill, who was charged with investigating the allegations of gerrymandering; namely, that the council's housing policy was used to rig the borough in favour of the Tories.

Already, though, it is taking on frightening proportions. Mr Magill (whose inquiry is already in its sixth year and has so far cost more than £3m) estimates that her policy of selling homes on the cheap in marginal wards and giving free house repairs for life lost the council £29.9m.

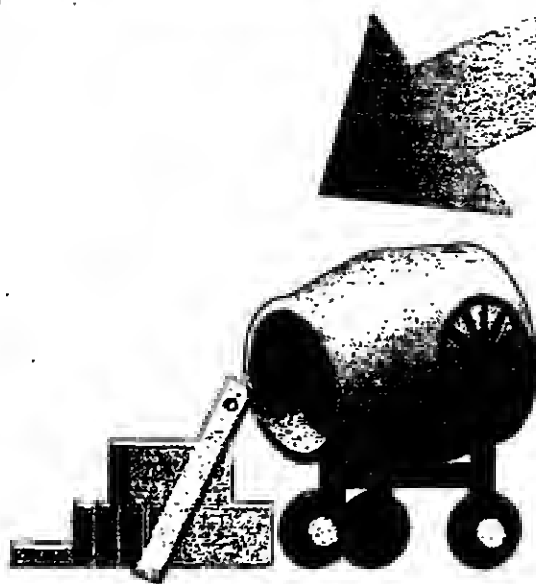
That is the sum which Porter and nine other councillors and officials can expect to have to find if they are surcharged.

Not among them will be Michael Dunt, once consultant



Asbestos

Allegations emerged yesterday that in 1989 Dame Shirley authorised the moving of 100 homeless families into flats where they risked asbestos poisoning, as part of a council gerrymandering policy. Two years later the tenants moved out and the flats were knocked down.



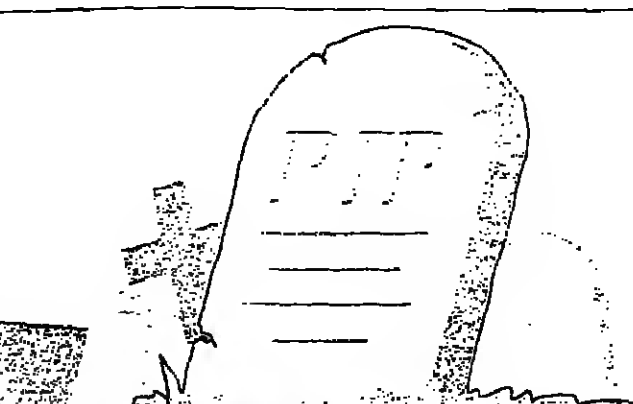
Leaseholders

After four-and-a-half years of investigation and three months of public hearings which ended in February this year, the district auditor accused the council of exempting leaseholders from repair bills on former council property between 1987 and 1991. The scheme is alleged to have cost the council £30m in lost revenue.



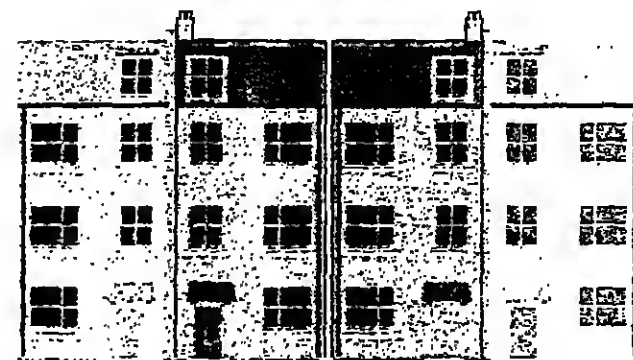
Dame Shirley Porter
Council leader, 1983-1991

The Westminster scandals



Cemeteries

In 1987 Dame Shirley ordered three council cemeteries to be sold for 5p each, as part of an aggressive policy to cut maintenance costs. Five years later the council bought them back for £4.2m.



Homes for Votes

In 1994, after a lengthy official investigation, six councillors and four officials were accused of operating an illegal "homes for votes" scheme. District auditor John Magill claimed the illegal "gerrymandering" - selling homes to potential Tory voters - may have cost tax payers £21m. The final report is due any day.

geriatrician at St Albans City Hospital and the Tory representative for Knightsbridge on Westminster City Council. In January last year, two weeks after publication of Mr Magill's provisional report, he shot himself.

His suicide note read: "My deci-

move-on, for there is an intolerable strain to be under - other questions are surfacing. Another report is being prepared on the council's former Tory leaders. This second investigation, while it does not hold out the prospect of enormous imme-

Her policy of selling homes on the cheap and giving free house repairs for life is estimated to have lost the council £29.9m

sion to end my life is due solely to the need to continue to fight this matter of designated sales, further draining my energy and requiring resources I do not have. I could not do my demanding medical work properly and without this I do not choose to continue living."

While Porter and her colleagues wait for Mr Magill - and he could do everyone a favour by getting a

date financial penalties, is no less disturbing - perhaps more so, if you believe that selling homes at a discount to likely supporters is one thing, but putting the homeless in potential death traps is another thing altogether.

The present Westminster administration has asked John Barratt, the former chief executive of Cambridgeshire council, to look

into the decision, taken by Porter's "chairmen's group" in February 1989, to give the homeless a fresh start in two tower blocks in a Labour stronghold in Paddington.

All very laudatory. Except the two blocks, Hermes and Chantry Points, were built in the Sixties, in the days when slum clearance was to the fore and the dangers of asbestos, which was used in the buildings, were not appreciated.

By the time 100 homeless families were offered space in the partially empty 31-storey towers, asbestos and the fatal disease it causes, mesothelioma, were dread words - and the council knew it. But in the finely balanced political make-up of Westminster, the alternative to putting 100 families, who were likely to be natural Labour supporters, in a Labour stronghold was placing them in more marginal wards. This was, it would seem, politically rather less palatable.

Against such alleged gerrymandering, attempts by a local group to buy the flats - they would have removed the asbestos - floundered.

The flats have long since been boarded up and demolished. Asbestos litigation lawyers - their pulses sent racing by comments such as this from one former tenant: "If that had been a private landlord, I perhaps could have forgiven, but knowing that this was a council and knowing we were vulnerable people, in the sense that we were homeless and we had a little child ... allowing us to live with such danger is, to me, unforgivable ..." - are standing by.

So, too, are Porter's legal advisers and supporters. Everything she did, they stress, was subject to careful legal scrutiny. "She never, ever, broke the law," said a Porter aide yesterday.

Others, though, are not so sure. They point to the "chairmen's

group", and question whose interests it was serving: the council's or Shirley Porter's? At least one law professor, Martin Loughlin at Manchester University, is on record as saying the move to Hermes and Chantry was unlawful "because it was an attempt by the 'chairmen's group' to harness the resources of the council for party political ends".

Now spending much of her time in Israel, Porter remains defiant and angry.

"She is astonished that anyone could think she would ever do such a thing. She has done nothing to be ashamed of."

That may be so. But what she has done has left the government with a huge question mark that refuses to go away. Once local government was Labour's problem, now it is also the Tories'. From heroine to embarrassment, Dame Shirley's fall has been total.

Witkes's

Witkes must admit to extreme jealousy on perusing Page Three of the Sun the other day to find the "gorgeous" Caroline Christensen, 29, linked with Philip Oppenheim, the "high-flying trade minister". Imagine Witkes's delight, then, the other night when, upon wandering into the Strangers Bar of the House of Commons, he spotted eight Christensen lookalikes - long-legged, blond "lovelies" as the tabloids quaintly dub them. Mr Oppenheim was in one corner, in deep conversation with male friends, while the eight models, all there at his invitation, were sadly ignored.

That was until Hywel Williams, the dashing special adviser to John Redwood, arrived. Hywel, a close friend of Philip's, a former housemaster at Rugby School and possessor of a history doctorate, got on with them like a house on fire. "Hywel seemed to have a magnetic effect on the most stunningly beautiful of the bunch," moaned a luckless Labour MP. "He must have some secret. I wish I knew what it was."

A warning for the Conservative leadership: Europe, the issue on which the party almost broke its back, is about to force itself to the surface again. As John Major prepares for the Madrid summit later this month, the Tory right is making plans for the longer-term battle over the single currency.

John Redwood, the challenger for the leadership in the summer, is planning to publish a pamphlet through the think-tank Conservative 2000, underlining his fundamental opposition to a single currency. Iain Duncan Smith, the MP for Chingford and a Redwood supporter, is beavering away on a pamphlet opposing European federalism, thus exploding the issue all over again.

The one policy that they see as a unifying factor is for the party to commit itself at the general election



Oppenheim: invited eight models

not to join a single currency within the lifetime of the next Parliament. Given a five-year term of office, that would take Britain up to the year 2002, which most ministers believe is the earliest date by which there is likely to be any realistic prospect of creating a single currency.

Some cabinet ministers, though, firmly in the pro-European camp, see the attractions of that formula for the election manifesto. They include Stephen Dorrell, a leading One-Nation Tory and the Secretary of State for Health. In fact, Westminster gossip says that Major may be persuaded by Dorrell - in spite of the opposition of Ken Clarke, our beloved Chancellor.

Witkes got the Budget leak that mattered: weeks ago he tipped readers off that the Chancellor would abolish the road fund licence

on cars more than 25 years old - touch to the delight of Clarke's parliamentary private secretary, Peter Butler, who has two greatly loved Austin 7s.

Less congenial to Clarke, perhaps, is that another of the first beneficiaries is John Redwood, who has a 1965 E-type Jaguar.

It must have been a bit like blowing kisses to the mirror, but President Clinton was apparently glowing with tributes in his long chat with Tony Blair, in which young Blair told his mentor all about the Clintonisation of the Labour Party. Bill was said to be so taken with Tony's new Labour that he wished he could borrow from some of the Labour leader's excellent speeches.

However, Bill cannot start his new Democratic campaign for the White House by promising to be "tough on crime", tough on the causes of crime. Since the American senator Joe Biden was caught out stealing Neil Kinnock's best lines, it has been impossible to get away with that sort of thing in the US, as the minute anyone says anything interesting the press start rifling through the collected speeches of Labour's finest.

Justly well done to Gyles Brandreth, that enthusiastic Tory MP who heard this week that he has been appointed to the Whips' Office. As he is instructed in the art of "putting a bit of stick about" he will have to concentrate hard on the main task of the most junior whip - pouring the champagne for his esteemed Whips' Office colleagues.

Andrew Mackay's big day as a government whip came yesterday when he got toggled up in morning coat and, armed with his wand of office, delivered his first official message from the Queen to the Speaker of the Commons. Red faces all round when, through a slip of the lip, the Speaker invited Andrew Mackinlay, the Labour MP, to step forward.

Luckily, MacKinlay - who last

week demanded an apology from Nicholas Soames for saying that the Princess of Wales was suffering from paranoia - was not in his place.



Evans the pin-up: MPs are jealous

Tory MPs have discovered that their colleague Nigel Evans, MP for Ribbles Valley, has been attracting fan mail since appearing on the box. Clearly jealous of "gorgeous" Nigel's success, some MPs have taken to writing to him anonymously, praising his good looks and asking for a signed photograph.

Which explains why Harold Elletson, MP for Blackpool North, has Nigel's framed portrait like a trophy on the wall of his Millbank office.

There was muttering among Witkes's Labour chums this week when they heard that Rupert Murdoch's empire had bought up the television rights to the Eidsfjell League, ensuring that all live football matches from divisions one, two and three will now be seen on BSkyB.

Labour MPs have realised that this is not particularly good news for their constituents who do not possess a satellite dish. They want Labour to attack it, but feel that the Aussie love-in between Blair and Rupe may make this difficult. "The trouble is, we're not sure what the leader's line is on Murdoch," confided one Labour MP.

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Which one should she choose?

What it is to be wooed! Yesterday three ardent suitors gathered under one balcony to sing songs of love. The metaphorical object of all their affections was the Scottish electorate, invited to choose between the one with greatest passion, the one with tongue of silver, and the one that warned against all the dishonourable intentions of both of the others.

Passion is the stock in trade of the Scottish National Party, which outlined its ideas for a fully independent Scotland. The monarchy can stay and Scotland should be happy to be a member of a new Association of States of the British Isles.

Sweet reason governs the parties of the Constitutional Convention, the Liberal Democrats and Labour. Scottish nationhood will be recognised in a new 129-member Scottish parliament (elected partly by proportional representation), enjoying limited powers over direct taxation and more substantial ones over domestic policies. And all done in such a way as to maintain Scotland as an integral part of the United Kingdom.

Fear rules the Conservative (and Unionist, of course) approach. The Scots will be the highest taxed folk in these islands once the "tartan tax" to be raised by the new parliament comes into being, they say. Furthermore, such a parliament will almost certainly end in the break-up of the Union, as energised nationalist forces rip the devolution settlement apart. Better far, said Michael Forsyth last night, a slow path to "real" devolution, involving greater powers for local agencies.

So who should Scotland choose? There is no overwhelming practical reason why it should not become an independent nation. Is it any less credible that Scotland should go it alone than, say, Slovakia, Slovenia and Estonia? Not at all. But such

a separation must arise from a clear-sighted appreciation of the possible costs of independence. It is doubtful whether such an appreciation exists.

This renders devolution very seductive. But we should not be blind to the real problems that a Scottish parliament may give rise to. So far there has been a failure to address the question of resolving disputes between the two parliaments, making the spectre of eventual breakdown more real. In addition, the issue of Scottish over-representation at Westminster remains to be tackled. There are doubts whether the proposals are sufficiently pluralistic to ensure that the new parliament avoids the traps of arrogance and distance that local and national government have fallen into. And surely there should be provision for the Scottish people to endorse or reject the broad form of devolution in a referendum.

What then of the Conservatives? Their strategic aim is not to win a majority of Scots to their view of the Union. It is instead to scare or cajole enough of them so as to minimise the loss of seats at the next election—a contest that could be very close. Their attack on possible higher taxes deliberately confuses the existence of a parliament with the policies that it might or might not follow.

Nevertheless their ideas (largely responses to requests from Scottish councils) for a limited devolution below national level in Scotland are sound. Real subsidiarity—taking power to its lowest practicable level—makes for better and more accessible government.

Which suggests the Scottish damsel should not accept one wooer, but instead demand to marry a composite of all their virtues—real devolution, real subsidiarity, real pluralism and real nationhood.

A hollow victory in the classroom

Parents, teachers and governors must be as muddled as ever about funding for schools. The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, says that education will get an extra £578m next year—a sum that should, in theory, more than make up for inflation. Yet local authorities deny that the settlement allows them to do more than tread water. They say that they will not be able to make a real increase in spending on schools—unless council taxes rise.

Who is right? Education has done pretty well in the Budget, considerably better than other areas of spending. But Mr Clarke has used smoke and mirrors to obscure what is really going on. The overall grant to local authorities is only going up in line with inflation. So the price of Mr Clarke's generosity to schools is that the grant for other local authority services now lags behind inflation. Given that councils are unwilling to rob Peter to pay Paul, Mr Clarke has effectively done no more than fund the status quo.

But the status quo is not good enough. Leaking roofs, empty bookshelves and equipment shortages speak of schools that desperately need extra resources. Teachers are so demoralised that they do not deliver the standards we need. A fresh approach is called for. As we argued yesterday, good teachers should be better paid, but teachers should be removed or retained.

Where should the money come from? Yesterday the Government eased capping

restrictions: local authorities will be able to raise the council tax to pay for extra expenditure on schools. This is a welcome development—local people ought to be able to vote to pay extra and spend extra on education. But this is not the whole answer. If schools were primarily financed by people living within a neighbourhood, then, as in the United States, poor areas would get poor schools.

If national government is to take the strain without raising taxes across the board, something else must give. Mr Clarke missed the chance to shift funding away from higher education and towards primary and secondary schools. Only 30 per cent of teenagers enter higher education. As graduates earning higher wages, they benefit considerably from their university training. It seems only fair, faced with a paucity of resources, that graduates should help to foot the bill for their privileges. A graduate tax is a good answer: it would help free up resources for the basic schooling that everyone needs.

In the absence of such radical action, the desperate and obvious inadequacies of state education will go unaddressed for yet another year. The Government may have an easier time than over the past 12 months. Protests from teachers may ebb, since their jobs should be safe. But the concern of parents is unlikely to abate and the potential of the nation's children will continue to be wasted.

ANOTHER VIEW Keith Shine

Our role in global warming

It is not really an issue whether our climate has changed. It has. One sign is the variation of surface temperature averaged over the globe since the middle of the last century: because instruments used to measure temperature have changed during this period and the fraction of the planet for which we have observations has varied, there are formidable problems in reconstructing this variation. Nevertheless, after these factors have been taken into account, it seems clear that the earth's surface has warmed by a few tenths of a degree.

A much bigger issue is whether we can explain that warming: in particular, can we attribute any part of it to human activity? Traditionally, many climate scientists have hedged their bets, using the double negative that warming is "not inconsistent" with the effects of human activity.

Many factors can influence climate. Natural factors include variations in the sun's output and the effects of volcanic eruptions. Until the early Eighties the dominant cause of human-induced climate change was believed to be increased atmospheric carbon dioxide, due to burning of coal, oil and gas and deforestation.

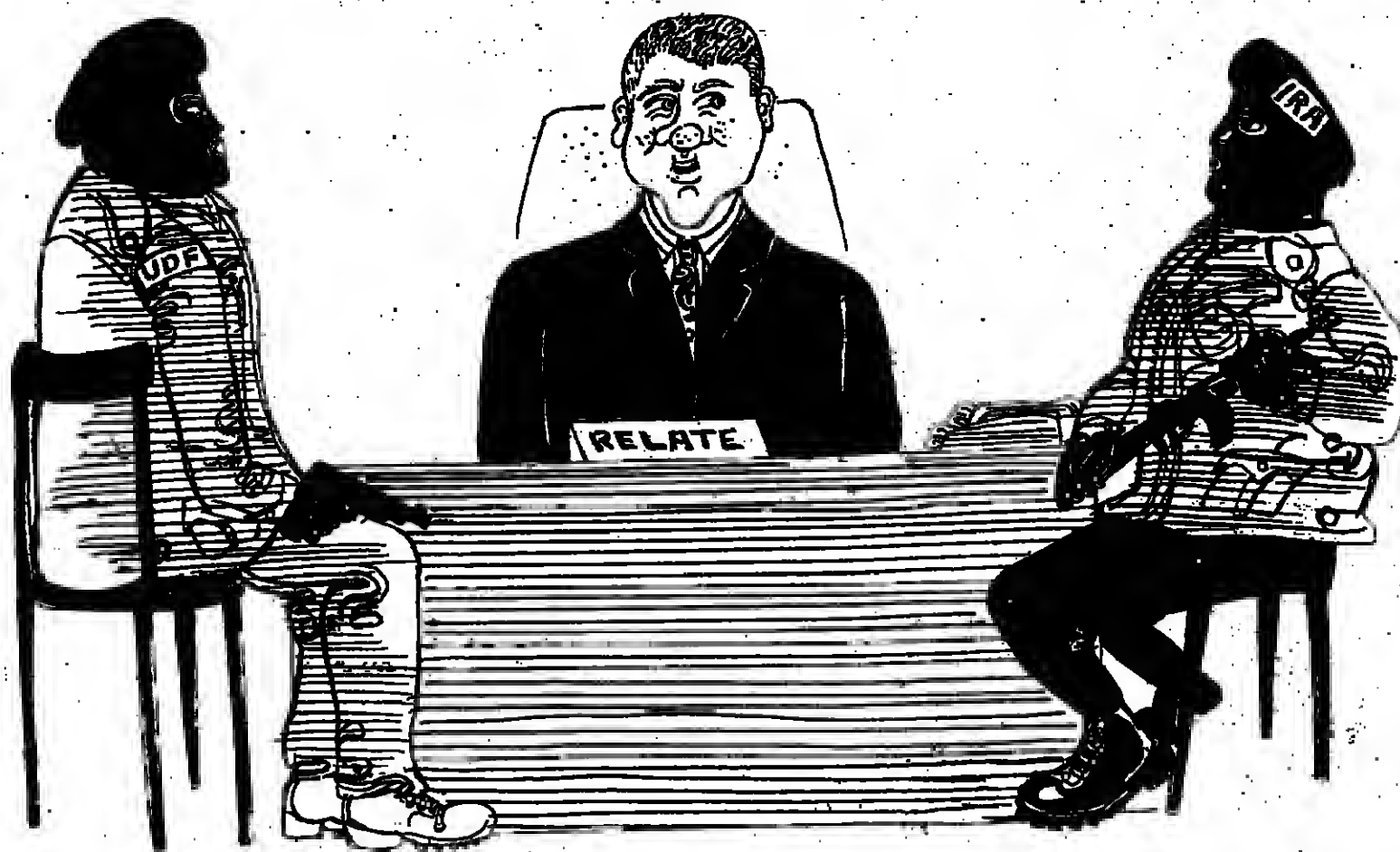
In the past decade, a plethora of other mechanisms have been identified: increased concentrations of gases, such as methane, add substantially to carbon dioxide's warming effect. But human activity has also led to increased atmospheric concentrations of many particles. These are believed to reflect the sun's energy and tend to cool the planet. And changes in

ozone, both near the surface and in the stratosphere, add pieces to the climate change "jigsaw puzzle". Unfortunately, we have yet to quantify the size of some of these factors with much confidence.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at its Madrid meeting this week has gone one step beyond "not inconsistent" to state that "the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate". Although, as one of the IPCC authors, I accept that this statement represents the majority view, I remain nervous about it. The computer simulations that were used as its basis have not included many of the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. These pieces need to be added, but we may never be able to unambiguously identify the human influence on the climate during the past century.

It seems clear that on a global scale, over the century as a whole, the human-induced factors are substantive compared to the natural factors that cause climate to vary. Some of these, in particular carbon dioxide, will continue to grow bigger in the coming decades. But in terms of characterising changes at the sub-continental scale, we have a long way to go. Ultimately, it is these regional changes that will affect our lives.

The writer is a reader in the department of meteorology at the University of Reading and has been a leading author of the 1994 and 1995 scientific assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.



"Gentlemen, I do not believe in divorce"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Nigeria's ills cannot be healed by Body Shop prescriptions

From Mr Nick Wood

Sir: I am one of the Shell workers called upon by Anita Roddick in Another View (28 November) to search their consciences. From where does her sense of moral superiority come? I strive to be a caring citizen in common with most people on this planet, including thousands of my colleagues—and, Ms Roddick, I do not separate my behaviour at work from my values. I would not work for a company whose activities were in any way responsible for the deaths of people, nor would any of the colleagues I have worked with around the world.

I work with Shell in Nigeria. I am closely involved with my Nigerian and expatriate colleagues who run our environmental programmes and work with communities in the Niger Delta to set up clinics and training workshops, build classrooms and supply teachers, build roads, provide water, and negotiate land acquisition and compensation. They work long hours, beyond company expectations, not because they want more profit for Shell but because they want to make a difference. They work in very difficult conditions in com-

munities that are very poor. They probably question the morality of the situation every day. But they are working to make things better and they are making an important contribution.

Shell's philosophy and culture are shaped by people like this. Are protesters with placards outside service stations in Europe making as much of a difference to the people of Nigeria?

Yours faithfully,
NICK WOOD
Shell Nigeria
Lagos
29 November

From Mr D. van den Broek
Sir: The future as dictated by Anita Roddick has seldom looked so unattractive. With her harsh call that "political awareness and activism must be incorporated into business", she must raise shivers among lovers of democracy.

The world she advocates would be a grim one indeed: a world where business turned its economic impact into a political weapon, bringing down a government here, installing an administration there. This, if it were possible, would match the worst nightmare of an Orwell or Hu-

sey. But, of course, this is not what Mrs Roddick really wants. The business activism which she demands would naturally have to be acceptable to her personal world view, politically corrected and approved, perhaps, by the Body Shop.

Mrs Roddick writes of transnational corporations "roaming from country to country in search of lowest wages, the loosest environmental regulations, the most desperate workers". This may be the case in the world of trading and franchises, but it is not the way a company like Shell does business. We believe in long-term commitment. In Nigeria, the focus of Mrs Roddick's present campaign, Shell has operated for more than 50 years; I am not sure, on the other hand, if the Body Shop has invested a single penny in the area.

A religious order working in Ogoniland has commented that without Shell's humanitarian aid following the Ogoni/Andoni conflict, one third of Ogonis would not be alive today.

Mrs Roddick would have us pull out of Nigeria. But this would simply be a gesture; a damaging, politically correct,

Body Shop-blessed gesture; a gesture that would hurt the very people Mrs Roddick says she cares for.

Mrs Roddick calls on Shell staff to become activists in her cause. But we prefer action to activism, performance to protest. And surely this must be the best way forward.

Yours faithfully,
D. VAN DEN BROEK
Regional Co-ordinator
Western Hemisphere and Africa
Shell Centre
London, SE1
29 November

From Mr A. N. Binder
Sir: Anita Roddick, handsome, clever and rich with a comfortable home and happy disposition, apparently wants Shell to quit Nigeria, thus provoking the downfall of the current regime. The real evils, indeed, of Anita's situation are the power of having rather too much her own way and a disposition to think a little too well of herself.

Yours sincerely,
A. N. BINDER
Speldhurst, Kent
28 November
The writer is a Shell pensioner.

Watch out for the hidden camera

From Mr Jeremy Walker

Sir: Your two articles (28 November) on closed circuit television (CCTV) were disappointingly superficial. It is debatable, as one of your authors pointed out, whether CCTV actually reduces crime overall because criminal activity, like water flowing downhill, will invariably find a way round obstacles in its path. The rise in crime in rural areas, where as yet there is little or no electronic surveillance, must in part be the result of the increasing presence of CCTV in towns and cities.

But even if CCTV were proved to be effective, it doesn't necessarily follow that its use is desirable. One of the most disturbing aspects of its popularity with the police, the public and, in particular, those who sell and promote it, is that the crucial question of whether the means are justified by the end is rarely addressed. As a consequence, there is no debate about at what point this method of deterring

crime becomes undesirable. For example, having cameras at the end of every residential road would almost certainly reduce DSS fraud and income tax evasion, because they would detect those who were working while signing on as unemployed. Does this mean that they should be installed as soon as the money for them can be found?

Most important of all, however, is that technological approaches to crime, which rely on external controls on criminal behaviour, will inevitably contribute to a weakening of internal controls. We should obey the law and respect our fellow-citizens simply because we ought to, not because there is a danger we will be caught if we don't. CCTV may bring temporary relief in areas where crime is a problem but, in fact, it is just another symptom of the increasing intrusiveness and repressiveness that pose an even greater threat to our freedoms than crime itself.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY WALKER
London, SW17
28 November

Simple fare

From Mr Geoffrey Holt

Sir: Your bold menu of "The 10 best ideas of the decade" (Second Section, 29 November) claims to have moved on from the economics-driven nostrums of the Eighties. But the patrons of your more pluralist cafeteria could nevertheless remain dissatisfied.

As one of your cited authors, Alasdair MacIntyre, has pointed out, the managerial conceits built up during a century of mechanistic social science—not just a decade of economic snake-oil—are themselves part of the intel-

lectual problem here. Should you be offering quite so temptingly the prospect of a model switch to Asian values, or a new scientific way of analysing and predicting complex changes?

In dressing up ideas with such apparent simplicity, you may be pandering to the lingering expectations many of us have for instrumental remedies.

Keep the cafeteria open, but make us chew over the implications more thoroughly!
Yours sincerely,
GEOFFREY HOLT
Hook Norton, Oxfordshire
29 November

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Bible translations before Luther

From The Rev Gilbert Markus, OP

Sir: It is exciting to read ("Luther's Bible found after 200 years", 23 November) that Martin Luther's Bible has been discovered. It is a pity, however, that you describe it as "the Bible that broke the monopoly of the Catholic Church and consigned Latin to antiquity". This suggests that old, and rather anti-Catholic, prejudice—that the old Vulgate Latin Bible was part of a Catholic conspiracy to keep the Bible out of the hands of Christians, a conspiracy finally overcome at the "Reformation".

The Vulgate was so called precisely because it was written in the common tongue of all literate people in western Europe. If one could read at all, one could read Latin; so a Latin Bible, far from restricting medieval readers, made it universally legible.

Secondly, a great many local vernacular translations of the Bible were made long before Luther produced his own. In the fourth century, Ulfilas made a Gothic translation, a bishop of Seville produced an Arabic bible

during the Moorish occupation of Spain, and most countries produced manuscripts of large sections of the Bible in their own tongues—in this country beginning with the seventh century Anglo-Saxon of Caedmon. The Norman-French Bible made at the University of Paris was widely used around 1250.

With the invention of printing, vernacular bibles multiplied. Of one German version alone, first printed in 1466, 16 editions had been printed before Luther's New Testament appeared in 1522. The first French New Testament appeared in 1478, five years before Luther's birth, and the complete French Bible in 1487. The Italians had theirs in 1471, the Dutch in 1477. The Swedes, the Bohemians, Slavs, Russians and Danes all had vernacular Bibles, circulated with full ecclesiastical support.

Whatever was going on in the 16th century, whatever the importance of Luther's own translation, it was not about putting the Bible in the hands of the people.

Yours sincerely,
GILBERT MARKUS
Holy Cross Priory
Leicester
24 November

Families reunited

From Mr Colin Fairclough

Sir: Following the Rosemary West trial, the subject of "missing persons" has again become a topic of interest and discussion ("Lost and not found", 28 November). There is very proper sympathy with those families from whom someone has recently left home, perhaps in unexplained or untoward circumstances. There is anxiety and a desire for urgent action.

It must also be recognised, however, that there are very large numbers of people for whom there has been a loss of contact over many years—perhaps through divorce or family breakdown of some other kind. There are many others who have never known the joy of a blood family relationship, because of childhood separation from parents and siblings. For such people the dis-

tress is equally present. Since it is of long standing, it is frequently deep-seated and traumatic.

The Salvation Army's Family Tracing Service was established in 1885, and it remains the world's largest and most successful tracing agency. Each year more than 5,000 active investigations are carried out in search of relatives. Every working day about 22 people are located. Christmas 1995 will see some 3,000 relatives in touch with their families who were separated this time last year.

Like the National Missing Persons Helpline, the Salvation Army's service depends upon charitable funding.
Yours faithfully,
COLIN FAIRCLOUGH
Lieutenant-Colonel
Director
Family Tracing Service
The Salvation Army
London, WC1

No justice in asylum lists

From Mr Alasdair MacKenzie

Sir: For years, refugees have been calling for their asylum claims to be dealt with speedily and fairly. The measures explained (letter, 29 November) by Ann Widdecombe, Minister of State in the Home Office, meet the first of these requirements, but certainly not the second.

As Ms Widdecombe states, the Home Office has set up two separate lists of countries. It is seeking, first, to designate by law certain states as safe from persecution (the so-called "white list"), while a second group of countries is being included on a "short procedure" list. The latter allows for supposedly "straightforward" asylum claims by people from those countries to be subject to an accelerated decision process.

Although the Home Office has drawn back from designating Algeria and Nigeria as safe, both countries do appear on the short procedure list. They share space with São Tomé and Cape Verde, which do not feature in Amnesty International's annual report. The Home Office apparently thinks that people fleeing some of the world's most savage regimes are as "straightforward" to assess as those from places where there are no human rights abuses at all.

In fact, the practical effect of this short procedure will be little different from designating the countries in question as safe. People raising credible concerns for their safety are likely to be refused asylum, purely because, within days of arrival, they are unable to provide documentary evidence to support their claims. The potential for injustice is huge, and the Home Office is simply ignoring legal representatives such as ourselves when we state that these time limits are physically impossible to meet.

As the short procedure does not require legislation, our concern is that it is an attempt to bring in a "white list" through the back door.
Yours sincerely,
ALASDAIR MACKENZIE
Co-ordinator
Asylum Aid
London, NI
29 November

Pigeons in distress

From Mrs H. P. Spittle

Sir: After reading Mike Everett's open letter "Dear pigeon fanciers" (Section Two, 28 November), I am reminded of several occasions when I have seen distressed racing pigeons. In very hot weather on a canal boating holiday we saw at least two lying on the concrete edge obviously exhausted, looking at the water, but with no hope of reaching it. On another occasion, my son rescued one in a similar state that had been blown many miles off-course in a storm. That one was returned to its owner through its identification tag.

All these would have been easy prey to a passing fox and would have had nothing to do with being caught by birds of prey. Many pigeons must go missing in these sort of circumstances; there seems a very high element of cruelty in the sport of pigeon racing.
Yours faithfully,
HELEN SPITTLE
Watford, Hertfordshire
28 November

صلى الله عليه وسلم

Take care in cyberspace, children

Despite this week's debates about taste and decency, our power to protect childhood innocence is on the wane

When a teenage magazine's agony aunt gave explicit advice about oral sex this week, there was an immediate outcry. Parents rebelled and retailers refused to stock the magazine. The BBC's new draft charter, also published this week, specified for the first time the corporation's obligation to broadcast programmes at "appropriate times", "to show concern for the young" and not to offend "against good taste and decency".

Both events yet again raise the difficult matter of how best to protect our children from exposure to "unsuitable" material. In the teen mag row, the prohibitionists lined up in call for a ban on the magazine in question, pinning their faith on the power of public opinion and the state to act as guardians of a shared morality. Their opponents immediately jumped to the defence of the magazine in question: teenagers who are given open and honest advice about sex are, they said, less likely to go on to be promiscuous than those denied that knowledge.

Neither position is very credible in the long term. The conservatives seem to want to protect children from their own sexuality, steadily ignoring the fact that children are becoming aware of their sexuality younger than in the past and physically maturing earlier. The libertarians, for their part, too often fall into the trap of treating children as mini adults, implying that no boundaries are needed on the free flow of information. One side has a halcyon vision of childhood innocence, the other fails to recognise that in this brave new world children might be vulnerable.

The idea of protecting a space for childhood innocence has its origins in the Victorian era. Victorians extolled the virtues of childhood and built a cocooned, pure world where children could grow up in a constant state of protection. This was partly a response to the fact that children had previously been treated like adults, sent to work down mines or in sweatshops, their shoulders from a tender age weighed down with the responsibilities of the adult world.

Now we seem to be returning full circle, with an ever-proliferating media and its barrage of messages being one of the main drivers of change, eroding and undermining childhood innocence. Hence the renewed attempts to regulate and control.

From this week's skirmishes it seems as if the forces of control are triumphing, but I wonder whether the regulators have won only the battle and not the war. The stark fact is that it is becoming increasingly hard to protect anything like an innocent, unsullied space for children to grow up in. Magazines may be relatively easy to control, but the very diversity of our media and the proliferation of new technologies means that every wall will be breached.

You don't need to spend very long surfing the Internet to get a feel for the problem: even minimal keyboard skills can get you into domains of the sexually bizarre that you would find



HELEN WILKINSON

Many parents feel a sense of loss at not being able to control medium or message

in only the most adult bookshops. Earlier this week I visited an impressive IBM exhibition in London, showcasing new technology and its social uses. I looked in on a stand designed to show the benefits of the Internet to schools. Yet within five minutes, instead of finding out about the capital of Outer Mongolia, I had accidentally surfed across some fairly hardcore pornography and Web sites for every imaginable minority sexual taste. My computer skills aren't better than the average eight-year-old's. I would guess that the numbers of children coming into contact with this kind of stuff are still fairly small – only 2,000 schools are using the Internet – but it is easy to see why parents are getting paranoid. Children can usually use new technologies better than their

parents. They have learnt to work the video timer, the remote and Sega and Nintendo games, while their parents gaze on bemused at such technological sophistication.

We are all having to face up to the fact that our children's familiarity with technology is bringing a new set of risks, especially if we want them to take full advantage of computers as tools of empowerment and education. Techno-liberationists like to present all this technological progress as a new-found freedom, and see any attempt to control the flow of images and messages as futile. But many of us know it's not quite as simple as that, especially where children are concerned: parents are fighting back in a desperate effort to keep childhood "pure". In America, the techniques of prohibition are taking on a new form, as more and more parents turn to technology itself to help them police access to information.

US manufacturers have developed a computer chip, the V-chip, which Congress has stipulated must be placed in all new television sets so that parents can block out channels and programmes deemed unacceptable for their children. At its launch BSB promised a different technology here, but with the same goal, a kind of push-button curfew to protect children from adult programmes. With the advent of multi-media and proliferating television channels such screening devices are likely to become increasingly popular.

But while it may be relatively easy

to control mass audience television channels, the prospect of policing cyberspace looks extremely remote, despite the efforts of the Singapore government and several US states to ban some services from the Internet. The dilemma governments face is that while they can make it harder to access a service directly, you can easily gain access to the Internet from another provider in another country, bypassing territorial control without having to move away from your computer screen.

Ultimately, the walls governments build are bound to be leaky. In an information age the myth of childhood innocence is being bust apart whether we like it or not by forces far beyond our control. Many parents feel a sense of loss – and threat – because of this. A loss, because parents can no longer rely on regulators and authorities to protect their children's innocence, and threat because, V chip or no V chip, they are increasingly powerless to control the medium, let alone the message.

So from now on we will have to come to terms with the fact that there will never again be a safe domain of childhood innocence (and perhaps there never was). Instead, parents will have to recognise that, just as they have to make their children streetwise to be safe in public places, so in cyberspace, if they want their children to be protected they will have to teach them from a much earlier age to make their own judgements about what is good and bad.

Christmas cons but once a year

Yesterday I brought you the first half of a checklist of all the things that will have to happen before Christmas. It is a bit like an Advent calendar, really: you have to tick off the boxes one by one, and when they are all ticked off, bingo! It's Christmas.

Here is the second half of the checklist. Good luck! Just remember every evening to check if anything on the list has happened today. They don't have to happen in this order, any order will do. Good luck!

□ You are in town one day when an ambulance passes very slowly, playing a highly distorted siren noise you have never heard before.

□ To your horror, you suddenly register that it is not an ambulance at all.

□ It is a municipal van that is playing highly distorted 'carol recordings'.

□ A tall, dark man calls at your door. He says: "Happy Christmas, sir. It's the dustmen."

□ You say: "What's the dustmen?"

□ He says: "We're the binmen, sir, come to wish you the compliments of the season and see if you want anything done..."

□ You suddenly realise that he has an outstretched hand and you realise what he wants, so you stuff a tenner in it and he goes away smiling and waving.

□ Your partner says: "Did you keep the Guardian Christmas quiz in yesterday's paper?"

□ You say: "Look, we have kept that quiz every year for 10 years, and the only time we ever tried it we couldn't answer a single bloody question!"

□ Your partner says: "Did you remember to take the lawn mower in for servicing?"

□ You say: "Plenty of time, plenty of time. Three months till spring."

□ She says: "So you didn't take advantage of that 50 per cent discount offer voucher I got you from the garden servicing place?"

□ But you know better than to answer trick questions like that.

□ What you have to do is ask trick questions of your own.

□ Like: "Did you remember to order the turkey?"

□ Ah, which point she asks a trick question like: "Have you tested the Christmas tree lights to make sure they're working?"

We don't want a repetition of last year.

□ The postman brings a parcel, a large one from Canada.

□ Delighted at this distraction, you open it and find it contains three nightdresses.

□ You say: "What the...?"

□ Your partner says: "God, you never learn, do you? You never open people's Christmas presents before Christmas!"

□ You say: "Well, how was I to know it was a present...?"

□ She says: "Have you ever stopped to wonder why his

parcels from in-laws in Canada only arrive just before Christmas and birthdays?"

□ There is a loud knock at the door.

□ Delighted by this distraction, you open it and find yourself facing a tall, thin man who says: "Compliments of the season, sir, it's the dustmen."

□ "Hold on," you say, "you lot came last week!"

□ "I'm afraid to say, sir," he says, "there's a ruthless gang of fake dustmen going round pretending to be us and getting all our Christmas boxes."

□ Heartstricken, you give him a tenner.

□ Later, you discover that it was the first lot, last week, who were actually genuine.

□ Your partner asks another trick question: "Have you booked for the pantomime yet?"

□ Smugly, you say: "Yes, last week, actually."

□ It will not be until Boxing Day that you discover you have

booked six seats for the whole of 34 panto.

□ You have booked it for a local glitzy one with six reduced TV performers, lots of musical songs and a terrible lot of the cut-

□ She wanted you to resident Léah for the arty, tradit two-year sen-

□ Oh, dear.

□ You buy a new pout. Pzemysaw

□ It is not until you've placed on pro-

that you realise your years. In April

in error, that convicted him of

□ There is a November 1993 the

door. It is a party was hospitalised.

They say: "Compliments of the sea-

son, sir, we're consulting police-

and him after the

of, saying: "I know

you can artist? You

a penny out of me?

□ A day of two late

knocks at the door

saying: "Blessed art thou for thou shalt bring

and his name..."

□ You tell the angel

□ When you tell your

about the shepherds and

angel, she looks thoughtful and

says: "It's none of my business,

but if three wise men knock at

the door in the near future, I

should be very nice to them..."

Tomorrow: what to do if a man

from King Herod comes to the

door and asks about young

babies in the neighbourhood.

Yesterday, Scotland reaffirmed its sense of nationhood in terms that no party can ignore

Pageantry fit for a new polity

Political pageantry which has been hallowed by time – or the BBC – is something we unhesitatingly accept. Queen's Speeches, Black Rods, Prime Minister's Questions, all are part of our culture. But new pageantry still has the power to shock and what happened in Scotland yesterday was, or ought to have been, genuinely shocking for anyone brought up in the Westminster way. This was politics, John, but not as we know it.

On the surface it was hardly even a story. The Scottish Constitutional Convention – which embraces Labour and the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish trade unions and local authorities and many smaller bodies – presented its final proposals for the shape and nature of a post-elect-



ANDREW MARR
Columnist of the Year

tion Scottish parliament. However radical by Westminster standards, these are now well known: the use of a proportional voting system; the commitment by the two main parties there to try for an equal number of male and female MSPs; the new and stronger committee system; the requirement for ministers to be voted into office by the parliament. As familiar were the omissions: nothing about the future number of Scottish MPs at Westminster or their powers; too little about funding and the ambiguous status of the Scottish Secretary in the British Cabinet. Such fudges may be mildly disreputable but they are scarcely shocking.

What was striking was the imagery and rhetoric of a new polity being born. The nationalist tide in Scotland today carries far more with it than just the Scottish National Party. Here in Edinburgh were moderate Kirk ministers and politicians of avowedly unionist parties gathered under scaffolds and Scottish banners, listening to speeches of a passionately leftist-patriotic kind which simply would not be made, let alone taken seriously, in London.

Trying to mist a sense of occasion for something new is a difficult and revealing business. Not that everything was new yesterday – far from it. The event took place in the Church of Scotland Assembly Hall in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town. It was here in 1949 that the Scottish Covenant was declared and signed by church ministers, councillors, businessmen and trade unionists. It, too, called for a single-chamber Scottish parliament with similar powers to the one proposed yesterday. Then, the Duke of Montrose, who signed first, was followed by sober-suited gents and, within a week, by 50,000 Scots.

The imagery then was conventional, romantic stuff, appealing to the Conservative-minded historian. This week, the messages were bewilderingly different. There were Gaelic songs.



Devolution enthusiasts gathered in Edinburgh yesterday

Photograph: Colin Macpherson

There were provocations from clerics, including a Congregationalist minister who declared the Scots to be "a people of the Book" in historic opposition to a "foreign [English] monarchical culture which has driven out God in favour of Mammon". There was the alternative Scottish anthem, "Freedom come all ye", robustly attacking Scotland's imperialist history. People were close to tears as they sang it.

There was an all-woman, boiler-suited drumming band performing under the gob-smacked stone gaze of John Knox – and uncomfortable-looking rows of Scottish Labour MPs. It was as if someone had sat down and lined up all the assumptions of Westminster life and then gone out of their way to mock every one.

Am I making too much of what was, in the end, a public relations exercise? No, I think not, because of the likelihood that Scotland will get a parliament designed, not at least heavily influenced, by the people who designed yesterday's launch. They were saying something it behoves the rest of us to hear. That challenge is now fully acknowledged by the Major administration itself, which is why Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, has launched his whirlwind campaign of less radical change to stop Home Rule in its tracks. The first, perverse, effect was to concentrate media attention on the Scottish Conven-

tion's proposals yesterday. But at least battle is joined and Scotland has a choice of two fundamentally different manifestos for change.

The Forsyth plan is only the latest instalment of a long Tory and unionist struggle to square Scottish patriotism with British nationalism. It was, after all, a Tory premier, Lord Salisbury, who in 1885 created the post of Secretary of State for Scotland, though mocking the job's significance when awarding it to another peer as "a matter where the effulgence of two Dukedoms and the best salmon river in Scotland will go a long way".

The Conservatives' historic dilemma has been how to make the Scots feel more connected and loyal to the British state without transferring significant political power away from Westminster. All the way through, affection without autonomy has been the aim. The Forsyth plans do not go as far as the devolution proposals approved by Edward Heath and designed by the late Lord Home 25 years ago (though never enacted). But they are squarely in line with the thinking of Conservative unionists from Lord Salisbury onwards.

What they offer is the near-at-hand spectacle of government accountability, pushed as far as unpromising unionism can go. John Major was genuinely struck recently by how far away London politics seemed in Scotland. Sending

Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine to answer MPs' questions in Hamilton, Dundee or Stirling is meant to close that gap of geography and imagination.

But using the Scottish Grand Committee to question ministers and argue over the detail of some legislation would not permit Scottish MPs by themselves to determine any important matter. The key phrase in Mr Forsyth's Commons statement on Wednesday was that Scottish Bills might be taken by the Committee in Scotland "whenever it makes sense to do so". This means, during Conservative rule, only in very limited cases. Examples given by the Government include a Bill on the licensing of raves. There will also be a procedure to allow Scottish MPs

It was as if someone had sat down and lined up all the assumptions of Westminster life and then gone out of their way to mock every one

to gather evidence in Scotland on proposed legislation – the example given this time being the Deer (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill. Revolutionary nationalism it ain't.

The changes were ridiculed by opposition parties: "a travelling circus"; "a series of Away Day returns for government ministers". In fact, they are remarkably similar to plans produced by Liberal and Labour MPs in the Sixties and Seventies. As Mr Forsyth explained, they would allow the Scottish Grand Committee to act as a mini-parliament in many respects, if Labour won at Westminster and allowed it to do so. Ten or 15 years ago, such proposals would have attracted the interest and perhaps the enthusiasm of many opposition MPs and groups.

But that time, I believe, has passed. Two of those who produced Forsyth-style plans a generation ago were the former Labour MP Harry Ewing and the young Liberal activist David Steel. The joint chairs of yesterday's launch in Edinburgh were Lord Ewing and Sir David. These days, they are both signed up to a project that is radical and quasi-nationalist in its tone and emotional origin, if not in its principles.

If the Conservatives manage to stop this, it will not be because of constitutional tinkering but because they have succeeded in frightening the Scots sufficiently with the thought of the "tartan tax" that an Edinburgh parliament might levy in the course of social reform. Oddly, if we are about to witness a battle between a leftist Scottish God and Old Tory Mammon, between the People of the Book and the People of the Pocket-Book, both sides will probably be satisfied and even eager to fight on those terms.

I, for one, have little doubt of the outcome. Scotland feels like a country that has grown apart from England in recent years, in its political culture as well as its pageantry. Unless the Union manages to accommodate this, the Union will not survive.

Generation Why

by Tony Reeve and Steve Way



A NEW HEAL'S STORE OPENS
ON DECEMBER 1ST

HEAL'S
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obituaries/ gazette

Matthew Ashman

American punk bands like Offspring, Green Day and Rancid are at present cleaning up all over the world with a sound (selling millions of records) very similar to what British acts were producing in the late Seventies and early Eighties. Matthew Ashman, the former Adam and the Ants and Bow Wow Wow guitarist, who died aged 35 after being admitted to hospital with complications arising from diabetes, was one of the post-punk scene which spawned groups like Siouxsie and the Banshees and Culture Club. To this day, his distinctive Mohican hairstyle (no doubt influenced by Robert De Niro's look in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, 1976) is imitated by wannabe punk rockers the world over.

Born in 1960 in Mill Hill, north London, Ashman picked up his first guitar while still at school. In 1978, he got his break when joining the second line-up of Adam and the Ants. With the flamboyant Adam (né Stuart Goddard) at the helm, the group had just appeared in Derek Jarman's punk movie *Jubilee* (1978) and was a regular on the John Peel show on Radio 1. However, the sado-masochistic subject matter of some of their material – titles like "Physical", "Ligotage" and "Whip in My Valley" were more the norm than the exception – made big labels wary of signing the band.

He took a chance on the "icky" "Young Parisians", flopped, but word of and constant touring propelled the "Zerox" and *Dark Wears White Sox* released on the small

Do it label) to the top of the newly established independent charts.

By January 1980, Malcolm McLaren was managing Adam and the Ants, who seemed poised to break big. However, the former Sex Pistols svenigall had other plans. He convinced the Ants (who by then comprised Matthew Ashman on guitar, Leigh Gorman on bass and Dave Barbarossa on drums) to split from Adam and form the nucleus of a new band fronted by the 15-year-old Annabella Lewin. A Burmese vocalist he had supposedly discovered in a laundrette. Strangely enough, the three jumped ship and, while Adam and yet another bunch of Ants went on to big chart success ("Kings of the Wild Frontier", "Dog Eat Dog", "Antmusic", "Stand and Deliver" and "Prince Charming" were just around the corner), Matthew, Leigh, Dave and Annabella struggled to find their own identity under McLaren.

The impetuous new Bow Wow Wow, as they were then called, as his Sex Pistols for the Eighties. The fashion designer Vivienne Westwood used them to introduce the pirate look while Jamie Reid, who had created most of the Sex Pistols artwork, worked on the sleeves and logos. Having got the usual large advance from EMI, McLaren helped the group write "C30, C60, C90 Go" (simultaneously released as a cassette single and a seven-inch 45, a first in Britain), which extolled the virtues of home taping to an infectious tribal beat. Back then, the slogan "Home Taping is Killing Music" was a regular

feature of many a company's letterhead. The big wig at EMI were not amused, especially when Bow Wow Wow put out as a follow-up, *Your Cassette Pet* featuring risqué songs like "Uomo-Sex-AI Apache" and "Sexy Eiffel Towers".

In a series of events duplicating the Sex Pistols' moves from EMI to A&M and then Virgin (as depicted in Julian Temple's movie *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*, 1979), Bow Wow Wow got a free transfer to RCA. The sleeve of the band's debut album (simply entitled *See Jungle Join Your Gang Yeah, City All Over! Go Ape Crazy!*) for their own label featured the three musicians sitting around



"See Jungle Join Your Gang Yeah, City All Over! Go Ape Crazy": Ashman with Bow Wow Wow

Photograph: Andy Phillips / SIN

a naked Lewin in homage to Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*. On a tide of press hype, "Go Wild in the Country" reached the Top 10 in January 1982.

An inspired reworking of the Strangloves' "I Want Candy", featuring Ashman's incisive guitar playing, followed it in the charts but McLaren was still tinkering with the formula: following Ashman's suggestion, the impresario got George O'Dowd to appear on-stage with Bow Wow Wow as Lieutenant Lush before he became Boy George. Following "When the Going Gets Tough the Tough Get Going" (masterminded by the Blondie producer Mike Chapman) in 1983,

McLaren lost interest in the group and started to plot his own solo career later scoring his hit "Buffalo Gals" (Double Dutch) and "Madam Butterfly". Annabella opted to go her own way while her three former associates launched Chiefs of Relief with Duncan Greig on keyboards. Ashman was one of the vocalists heading various incarnations of this band which at one point included the former Sex Pistols drummer Paul Cook. In the late Eighties, Ashman became a session guitarist (he played with Ovi 3 and Transvision Vamp's Wendy James) and then started his own project called Agent Provocateur.

Maharaja Martand Singh of Rewa

ingh was the last Rewa, the erstwhile ruler of central India, international fame and breeding the tiger. A wildlife co-ordinator worked hard to a dwindling population in the area, he rescued Rewa in 1975.

is for discovering the ce of the white tiger in jungles in 1950, that is renowned. He concluded that Rewa's white tiger were not freak albino but a exotic strain which had

evolved only in this region. All white tigers in zoos around the world can trace their ancestry to the thick jungles around Rewa.

Martand Singh was born in Rewa state in 1923, the son of the maharaja, Sir Gulab Singh, a formidable shikari or hunter who had shot over 500 tigers. With an area of 13,000 square miles, Rewa was the largest princely state in central India (now the Madhya Pradesh), and well known for its huge tiger population.

Sir Gulab Singh, who hosted scores of shoots for senior

British officials, had devised a novel way to shoot tigers which did not quite meet the sporting standards of many shikaris. He would take a book and a key on a long string with him into the machine or shooting platform high up in the trees, order the beat to begin and settle down to read.

As soon as the tiger approached, the monkey would sense its presence and instinctively alert the maharaja with a warning cough. Sir Gulab would then casually lay aside his book and nonchalantly shoot dead the animal before repeating the

exercise at least one more time on an outing.

Martand Singh was educated at Delhi College and in India, before graduating from Mayo College in Ajmer in Rajasthan in 1944. Both Dab and Mages were Chiefs colleges, founded in northern India for the sons of the maharajas. There the young princes lived in palace-like boarding houses surrounded by retainers and strings of polo ponies. Some princes even kept their own elephants.

In the early Forties Singh married Princess Pravara of

Kutch, in western India, and succeeded his father as Maharaja of Rewa in 1946. He officially retained the title until 1950, when it was abolished by the Indian government in 1970.

Soon after becoming maharaja, Singh set about conserving Rewa's forests and tigers, which he believed, more than any other animal, link environmental issues with India's religious and mythical beliefs.

It was during these conservation efforts that he came across a cub and began his investigations into the white tiger. Singh's efforts at conservation con-

tributed towards the recent designation of Madhya Pradesh, home to around 900 tigers, a "Tiger State" to protect the animal against poaching. Ecotourism, gentle and well-read Singh was a good exponent, especially when it came to jungle and tiger stories.

Kalish Singh
Martand Singh, politician and conservationist, born Rewa, India, 1923; succeeded 1946 as Maharaja of Rewa; MP for Rewa 1971, 1980, 1985; married Princess Pravara (one son); died Rewa 20 November 1995.



Hush: gritty social realism

surprise that she fought her illness with exactly the same tenacity of spirit, never losing her wit or her luminous generosity.

Paula Milne
Susi Hush, television producer and writer, born Thurgoland, Yorkshire 12 December 1945; married 1968 Roger Tucker (one son; marriage dissolved); died London 27 October 1995.

Michael Barrett

Michael Barrett was a principal pioneer of the Moral Re-Armament movement as secretary to Frank Buchman, its American founder. He was with Buchman in the Black Forest near Freudenstadt in 1938 when Buchman, ruminating about impending war, first dictated his thought that "the next great movement in the world will be for moral and spiritual re-armament for all nations".

Barrett accompanied Buchman to America in 1939 to launch MRA there. The aim was to engage in a morale-building programme in American factories. When MRA was incorporated in the United States, Barrett wrote the preamble to its constitution: "Riches, reputation or rest may have been for none of us the motives of association... Our security has been the riches of God in Christ Jesus," it read in part.

During the Second World War, Barrett served as a captain in the 8th US Air Force which flew the spearhead planes during the D-Day landings. With 250,000 USAF personnel based in Britain, Barrett did much to build co-operation between the USAF and RAF commands, proposing an exchange of bombing skills and techniques. He was appointed head of Information and Education for the 8th Air Force, responsible for setting up 60 job-training schools for its personnel.

At war's end, a telegram from General Marshall, US Chief of Staff, ordered Barrett's immediate release from service to be "assigned to the work of Moral Re-Armament".

The son of an Edinburgh businessman, Barrett had encountered Buchman's Oxford Group, the forerunner of MRA, at Oxford University, where he

gained his MA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics in 1933. He learnt shorthand and typing to assist Buchman, who said that Barrett "had the mind of a statesman and he loved to serve".

He married Margaret Carey-Evans, a granddaughter of David Lloyd George, and together they took part in MRA work for reconciliation in India, South-East Asia, South Africa and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

Tall and dignified, Michael Barrett retained a strong faith and dry sense of humour. He was at home with kings and presidents but never lost his common touch.

Michael Smith
Michael Barrett, moral campaigner, born Edinburgh 28 February 1912; married 1947 Margaret Carey-Evans; died Edinburgh 29 October 1995.

Susi Hush

The television producer and writer Susi Hush was a feminist before it was either politically correct or fashionable to admit to it and she remained steadfast to that cause long after many had relinquished their loyalty. She did not subscribe to the strict "in your face" brand of women's activism – hers was more the quietly tenacious kind which infused every activity of her life.

She was born in Thurgoland, in Yorkshire, in 1945. After going to grammar school she attended Sussex University, where she graduated in English and American Studies. She started her television career in 1969 at Granada as an interviewer and current affairs producer. In the early 1970s she transferred her interest to drama and became a script editor.

I first met Hush in 1975 when she was producing *Coronation Street*. She endeavoured not only to give aspiring women writers – like myself – their first break but also tried to imbue the narrative with countervailing, gritty social realism. In short she tried to extend not only the parameters of the genre but also deepen the connection with the audience. She went on to produce in the same vein the court-room series *Crown Court* – several episodes of which she also wrote.

In the late 1970s Hush left Granada to go freelance and later became an independent producer. This may not seem so unusual now when every producer you encounter has their own production company but it was an unenviable bold move 17 years ago – particularly as she had a young son to support.

After producing two series of the BBC serial *Grange Hill* (for which she won a Bafta award)

and Channel 4's first drama series, *Winter Sunlight*, Hush joined the team of television luminaries responsible for setting up Limehouse Productions. She called me to say they were looking for "experimental" plays for a possible slot on Channel 4. I confessed to being rather sceptical about what "experimental" actually implied and that anyway I was then working on a story about a downtrodden ham radio operator who contacts a round-the-world yachtman, an idea which was Frank Capra in tone and definitely linear in narrative.

Hush listened to the idea and then said, "OK, scrap the experimental bit – let's go with yours." In that sense, she was always ideas – rather than market-led. The play, *CQ*, was later transmitted in a strand of plays Hush produced for Limehouse/Channel 4, one of which –

Home Video, by Lesley Bruce – won the International Prix Jean D'Arcy award for innovative work on video.

A litany of plays and drama series followed, including *To Have and To Hold* for LWT, an eight-part serial about the complexities of surrogacy. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s Hush worked freelance developing projects through her production company.

Susi Hush had an instinctive, mercurial intelligence which was both incisive and compassionate. She was endlessly intrigued by the subtleties of human nature and it was this which made her such an invigorating producer and a sensitive, stimulating friend. Like many innovative spirits she hit peaks and troughs in her professional and private life but she faced both with dignity and awesomely fierce stamina. It was no

surprise that she fought her illness with exactly the same tenacity of spirit, never losing her wit or her luminous generosity.

Paula Milne
Susi Hush, television producer and writer, born Thurgoland, Yorkshire 12 December 1945; married 1968 Roger Tucker (one son; marriage dissolved); died London 27 October 1995.

Yesterday at the Guildhall, London, Dr. L.M. Singh, Indian High Commissioner, presented the International Council of Christians and Jews' Interfaith Gold Medal to Miss Betty Boothroyd MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, at a reception held yesterday at Speakers' House, London SW1. Sir Sigmund Sternberg presided.

Dinners
Headquarters Strike Command Air Chief Marshal Sir William Winton, Air Chief Commanding-in-Chief, Headquarters RAF Strike Command, received the guests at a Dining In Night held yesterday evening in the Officers' Mess, Headquarters Strike Command, RAF High Wycombe. Gp Capt A.C. Montgomery presided.

Synagogue services
Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 3.40pm.

United Synagogue: 0171-387 4308. **Conservative Synagogue:** 0171-262 2214. **Liberal and Progressive Synagogue:** 0171-430 1463. **Reform Synagogue of Great Britain:** 0171-349 4731. **Spanish and Portuguese Jews Synagogue:** 0171-269 5273. **New London Synagogue (Orthodox):** 0171-432 1624.

Lectures
National Gallery: *Marl Griffiths, "Gold (I): Marims van Reymerswaele, Two Tix Gathers"*, 1pm. *British Museum: Lucy Adams, "Carolingian and Ottonian Art and Architecture"*, 1.15pm.

Receptions
Usher University
The President of the United States, Mr Bill Clinton, inaugurated the Tiv O'Neill Chair Conflict Resolution, to be held at Magee College, Ulster University, at a civic reception held

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Anniversaries
Births: John Keill, philosopher and mathematician, 1671; Madame Marie Tussaud (Groscholtz), waxwork exhibitor, 1761; Henry Williamson, author and novelist, 1895; Mary Martin, actress and singer, 1913. Deaths: Blanche of Castile, wife of King Louis VIII of France, 1252; St Edmund Campion, St Alexander Broom, and St Ralph Sherwin, Jesuit martyrs, executed 1581; Dr George Birkbeck, founder of Birkbeck Col-

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unit trusts/data

Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING		DOLLAR		D-MARK	
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Country	Spot
US	1.5956	15.8	25.23	UK	0.989
Canada	0.7089	6.7	21.41	Germany	0.0056
France	2.2055	5.45	10.14	Italy	0.0056
Italy	1.9454	6.50	20.24	Spain	0.0056
Japan	162.29	6.84	20.24	Sweden	0.0056
Switzerland	1.4895	15.7	24.7	Denmark	0.0056
Netherlands	0.6526	10.5	20.94	Norway	0.0056
Belgium	0.4711	9.8	20.7	Finland	0.0056
Australia	0.6526	10.5	20.94	South Africa	0.0056
New Zealand	0.4711	9.8	20.7	Portugal	0.0056
South Africa	0.6526	10.5	20.94	Greece	0.0056
Portugal	0.4711	9.8	20.7	Ireland	0.0056
Greece	0.6526	10.5	20.94	Israel	0.0056
Ireland	0.4711	9.8	20.7	India	0.0056
Israel	0.6526	10.5	20.94	China	0.0056
India	0.4711	9.8	20.7	South Korea	0.0056
China	0.6526	10.5	20.94	Japan	0.0056
South Korea	0.4711	9.8	20.7	USA	0.0056
Japan	0.6526	10.5	20.94		

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.5956	Malaysia	0.0056
Brazil	0.7089	Philippines	0.0056
Canada	0.7089	Portugal	0.0056
France	2.2055	Spain	0.0056
Germany	0.0056	Sweden	0.0056
Italy	0.0056	Switzerland	0.0056
Japan	162.29	Taiwan	0.0056
Netherlands	0.6526	Thailand	0.0056
Belgium	0.4711	UK	0.989
Australia	0.6526		

Tourist Rates

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.5956	Malaysia	0.0056
Brazil	0.7089	Philippines	0.0056
Canada	0.7089	Portugal	0.0056
France	2.2055	Spain	0.0056
Germany	0.0056	Sweden	0.0056
Italy	0.0056	Switzerland	0.0056
Japan	162.29	Taiwan	0.0056
Netherlands	0.6526	Thailand	0.0056
Belgium	0.4711	UK	0.989
Australia	0.6526		

Interest Rates

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.5956	Malaysia	0.0056
Brazil	0.7089	Philippines	0.0056
Canada	0.7089	Portugal	0.0056
France	2.2055	Spain	0.0056
Germany	0.0056	Sweden	0.0056
Italy	0.0056	Switzerland	0.0056
Japan	162.29	Taiwan	0.0056
Netherlands	0.6526	Thailand	0.0056
Belgium	0.4711	UK	0.989
Australia	0.6526		

Bond Yields

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.5956	Malaysia	0.0056
Brazil	0.7089	Philippines	0.0056
Canada	0.7089	Portugal	0.0056
France	2.2055	Spain	0.0056
Germany	0.0056	Sweden	0.0056
Italy	0.0056	Switzerland	0.0056
Japan	162.29	Taiwan	0.0056
Netherlands	0.6526	Thailand	0.0056
Belgium	0.4711	UK	0.989
Australia	0.6526		

Money Market Rates

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.5956	Malaysia	0.0056
Brazil	0.7089	Philippines	0.0056
Canada	0.7089	Portugal	0.0056
France	2.2055	Spain	0.0056
Germany	0.0056	Sweden	0.0056
Italy	0.0056	Switzerland	0.0056
Japan	162.29	Taiwan	0.0056
Netherlands	0.6526	Thailand	0.0056
Belgium	0.4711	UK	0.989
Australia	0.6526		

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est/Cont	Open Interest
Long FT-SE	10.07	10.08	5944	6788
Short FT-SE	10.07	10.08	5944	6788
Long FT-SE	10.07	10.08	5944	6788
Short FT-SE	10.07	10.08	5944	6788

Life FT-SE Index Option

Settlement price	Settlement price	Settlement price	Settlement price
10.07	10.07	10.07	10.07
10.07	10.07	10.07	10.07
10.07	10.07	10.07	10.07

Commodities

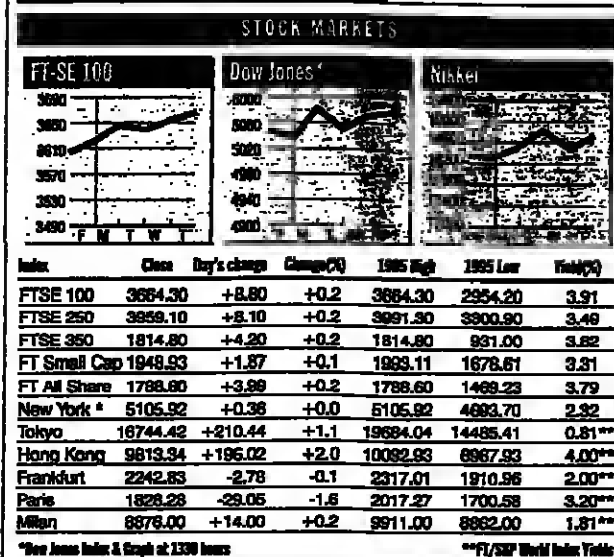
Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Oil	10.07	Gold	10.07
Oil	10.07	Gold	10.07
Oil	10.07	Gold	10.07

100 Largest Insurance Funds

Fund	Assets	Fund	Assets
1. Prudential	10.07	51. Prudential	10.07
2. Prudential	10.07	52. Prudential	10.07
3. Prudential	10.07	53. Prudential	10.07

Unit Trust	Assets	Unit Trust	Assets
1. Prudential	10.07	51. Prudential	10.07
2. Prudential	10.07	52. Prudential	10.07
3. Prudential	10.07	53. Prudential	10.07

MARKET SUMMARY



MAIN PRICE CHANGES

FTSE 350 companies (including investment trusts)

Company	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
British Biotech	1548	505	48.4
Celltech Group	549	42	8.2
House Of Fraser	167	10	6.4
White Crodon Grp	129	6	4.8
British Sky Br	434	20	4.8

INTEREST RATES



Money Market Rates

Rate	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year
UK	6.69	6.32	7.54	8.48
US	5.88	5.50	5.76	7.93
Japan	0.38	0.41	2.68	4.95
Germany	4.03	3.78	6.15	7.33

CURRENCIES



Pound

Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.5295	-0.0450	1.5672
\$ (New York)	1.5305	-0.3000	1.5688
DM (London)	2.2105	0.0600	2.4639
DM (New York)	2.2105	0.0600	2.4639
¥ (London)	155.28	-70.50	155.68
¥ (New York)	155.28	-70.50	155.68

OTHER INDICATORS

Indicator	Yesterday	Day's change	Year Ago
Oil Brent \$	17.20	+0.12	17.1
Gold \$	397.70	-1.95	390.0
Gold £	253.48	-0.53	242.148

IN BRIEF

MEPC confirms tough property market

Britain's second largest property company, MEPC, confirmed the difficult property market yesterday, announcing a decline in its net asset value per share from 473p to 457p.

Profits advanced 10 per cent to £123m, however, allowing the full-year dividend to be maintained at 20p, and the company took the unusual step of reassuring investors that it would be at least sustainable at that level barring unforeseen circumstances. The shares closed 4p lower at 394p.

Comment, page 25

Small businesses less confident

Small business confidence has slumped to its lowest level since sterling's withdrawal from the European exchange rate mechanism, according to 3i, the UK's biggest venture capital group. The latest quarterly survey by its Enterprise Barometer, covering over 400 client companies, shows that most respondents remain confident about their own prospects, but optimism concerning the general climate has slipped for the fourth quarter in a row.

The index now stands at a positive balance of 17, against 45 in the previous three months.

Results, page 26

Lonrho shareholders approve merger

Lonrho yesterday gained shareholder consent for the proposed merger of its platinum interests with those of Impala/Gencor. However, the conduct of the meeting was immediately criticised by Tiny Rowland, the founder of the company, who was opposed to the deal.

He said the company relied on the proxies of absent shareholders to vote the deal through.

Lonrho said the completion of the merger was now conditional only on the approval of the Impala shareholders at a meeting scheduled for December 5 and on regulatory and legal clearances.

Hanson's £2bn disposals bring an era to an end

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

Hanson is planning to raise up to £2bn from disposals of non-core businesses in a move that has been seen as marking the end of the conglomerate, the acquisition-driven, unfocused and financially based grouping of companies of which Hanson was the most flamboyantly successful during the 1980s.

The move has partly been

forced on the company by soaring borrowings following the acquisition of Eastern Group, the regional electricity company. The £2.5bn cost of that deal will take Hanson's gearing to 130 per cent of shareholders' funds.

Some observers believe it also reflects a change of strategy following the death earlier this year of Gordon White, the driving force behind Hanson's acquisition programme during the group's growth years.

But the City's disenchantment with diversified industrial groups has also played a part - Hanson's shares, which were worth 20 times as much at the end of the 1980s as at the start, are now trading at less than they were five years ago as investors have focused on the fact that it is increasingly difficult for a group valued at £10bn to do deals that make a meaningful difference.

They closed unchanged yesterday at 192.5p, where they

yield 7.8 per cent, much higher than the market average.

Derek Bonham, the chief executive, refused to be drawn on which businesses were up for sale. Recent speculation has focused on Cavenham, the American lumber operation, and Suburban Propane, the gas business, both of which suffered a sharp fall in profits last year.

Following the demerger during the year to September of US

Industries, a collection of small American subsidiaries, Hanson is now presenting itself as having a clearly defined focus on four core areas. These are energy, chemicals, building materials and equipment, and consumer goods, including Imperial Tobacco.

News of the asset disposal plan accompanied full-year figures for the 12 months to September, showing a sharp rise in underlying profits on the back of soaring chemicals prices.

Operating profits from continuing operations jumped from £1.03bn to £1.49bn although at the reported pre-tax level there was a decline from £1.37bn to £1.28bn after last year's one-off profit, mainly from the sale of Besser Homes.

The City was disappointed by Hanson's failure to raise its quarterly dividend, which has been 3p for six consecutive quarters, giving a total of 12p.

Investment Column, page 26

Revolution in share dealing to hit City

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

The Stock Exchange yesterday announced a revolution in share dealing that could result in heavy job losses among the City's highest paid traders. The controversial decision to go ahead with order-driven dealing before the end of next year heralds another Big Bang, threatening the demise of the old jobbing tradition in Europe's financial capital.

But the powerful market-making firms that see their livelihoods at stake are mounting a fierce rearguard defence, and yesterday's stormy Stock Exchange board meeting failed to resolve the crucial issue of whether the new facility will compete head-on for the same top FT-SE stocks with the traditional quote-driven system. Heated arguments raged between board members, with some privately threatening to resign from the Exchange.

The precise shape of the new hybrid dealing system is to be sorted out in consultation over the next three months, during which the influential market-making firms are expected to argue vigorously for the maintenance of their lucrative privileges. But Michael Lawrence, the Exchange's chief executive, warned yesterday that London could not stand still. Competing trading systems already exist for the same stocks, both in London and the Continent, and the Exchange risks losing business if it does not offer choice, he said.

"The Board has taken a significant decision. It has agreed that the introduction of an order-driven system is not an if, but a how. This is what the consultation process must sort out," he said. The board, and the market generally, is deeply divided, between market-making firms such as BZW, NatWest, SBC, Warburg, UBS and Merrill Lynch (Smith New Court), and the mainly continental and US

firms that are used to order-driven dealing. The Exchange's institutional customers are leaning towards the order-driven option in the belief that it will reduce dealing costs by cutting out the expensive market-making middlemen.

Under the quote-driven system, which is the hallmark of City share trading, market-making firms use their capital to offer continuous, firm prices at which equities can be bought and sold. They make money from the difference between buy and sell prices, and their expert knowledge of the market.

An order-driven system cuts out these middlemen, automatically and anonymously matching buyer and seller, but it cannot guarantee that a deal can always be struck immediately. Market-makers argue that if they are forced to compete with order-driven facilities for the same stocks, their margins will be squeezed until they are driven out of business. Each of the big firms employs around 50 market-makers, who represent the City's highest-paid dealing elite.

Asked about the arguments in yesterday's board meeting over how the two dealing systems would co-exist, Mr Lawrence said: "We made no commitments to anybody. The only decision is that there will be order-driven dealing." But he conceded that the consultation could end up without order-matching for the top stocks. "Whatever the market prefers, that is what we shall give them," he said. The Stock Exchange's new Sequence technology, which is able to replicate every known trading system in the world, will go into operation on 27 August 1996.

Order-driven dealing will begin either on that date or within a few months. "We believe it is three years ahead of any known system in the world, and the power it will give London is global power," Mr Lawrence said.

Grand Met denies intention to sell Burger King



Sell-off saga: Grand Metropolitan, the food and drink group led by (from left to right) Lord Allen Sheppard, George Bull and John McGrath, denied it was considering selling Burger King yesterday. The Labour Party demanded to know how many staff had been paid compensation for earnings lost in the Burger King 'clocking off' row. Grand Met reported a modest decline in full-year profits yesterday from £945m to £912m. Photograph: FT

UKTV set to seek C5 review

MATTHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

UKTV, the rejected bidder for Channel 5, is poised to petition the High Court for a review of the controversial award.

The move, which could be announced on Monday or Tuesday, would put additional pressure on the Independent Television Commission, which awarded the 10-year licence to a consortium led by the media companies Pearson and MAI.

The consortium, backed by CanWest, the Canadian broadcaster, and SeletTV, the independent production company, was said last night to be taking final advice from its lawyers, Clifford Chance.

Virgin TV, another rival bidder for the licence, was granted leave last week to have the decision reviewed by the High Court, during hearings scheduled for January. It is believed that Virgin's success in the courts emboldened UKTV to reconsider an earlier decision not to proceed with legal action.

A UKTV spokesman declined to comment, but sources close to the company said "fresh information" arising from the Virgin TV legal challenge had weighed heavily in their deliberations.

UKTV bid £36m for the licence, but was rejected on quality grounds. Virgin TV and Pearson/MAI bid an identical £22,002,000, while New Century Television, grouping BSkyB, Granada and others, bid a low £2m. Only Pearson/MAI and New Century passed the ITC's quality threshold, and the licence was awarded to the higher of the two qualifying bids.

Legal threats mount at Forte

JOHN SHEPHERD
and MATTHEW HORSMAN

Some of Forte's institutional shareholders will take legal action should the Council of Forte use its crucial 50 per cent vote to block Granada's £3.3bn hostile takeover bid for the hotels company, it emerged yesterday.

include Mercury Asset Management, with 13 per cent, Standard Life, Capita and Scottish Amicable.

A source close to one of Forte's main shareholders said yesterday: "The Council is a respectable and independent body."

"It would be unfortunate if such a small shareholder could

obstruct the freedom of choice of other shareholders. Under those circumstances no one could blame shareholders for testing the decision in the courts."

The Council itself is to seek a court hearing in the next two weeks to seek clarification of its responsibilities. The three lords, one duke, one earl, two knights,

and the Hon Hugh Astor who constitute the Council have also hired the advisory services of Hambros Bank and Macfarlanes, the legal firm.

A decision on the Council's planned action regarding the takeover bid will not be taken until Forte has published its defence document, due a week from today at the latest.

Ministers lose ECGD money

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

The Government's Export Credit Guarantee Department lost £24.4m last year as a direct result of an order from ministers to insure deals with Russia that would normally have been rejected as too risky.

As a result, the ECGD has insisted on separating out in its accounts the effects of politically motivated export credit decisions that it would not have made on its own.

The ECGD has won agree-

ment to publish a separate trading account for "guarantees issued, on the written instruction of ministers, which ECGD's accounting officer had advised did not meet normal underwriting criteria."

The accounting innovation, which makes the costs of political decisions transparent for the first time, is with the full agreement of John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General.

In a report attached to the ECGD accounts, Mr Bourn says that Brian Wilton, the ECGD chief executive, had advised min-

isters that written instructions for the Russian guarantees were necessary.

Under ministerial instruction, \$800m (£523m) of export credit and investment insurance facilities have been made available to Russia, a move announced in 1992. But the first three deals, worth £167m, did not come to fruition until the last financial year.

Another two deals worth £20m have been agreed since the year end and more are expected. Ministers have also announced a £50m export guarantee pro-

gramme for Jordan which will come into the same category.

The separate account shows that the ECGD received a premium of £16.2m to insure the £167m Russian deals. But using its standard assessment of the riskiness of dealing with Russia, the ECGD made an immediate provision of £39.8m to cover the likelihood that it will be forced to pay up on the insurance - representing almost a quarter of the contract total.

This resulted in a loss after administration and other expenses of £24.4m.

Amec bid battle heats up

The bid battle between construction group Amec and Norway's Kvaerner intensified yesterday when the UK group's advisers contacted the Takeover Panel, writes Russell Hooten.

County Natwest, adviser to Amec, fears Kvaerner may be in breach of the takeover code when it publishes the terms of its offer to preference shareholders.

Kvaerner has mounted a £202.6m cash bid for the ordinary shares, but has until Monday to detail the terms of its offer for the large number of preference shares in issue, worth about £172m.

The warring sides held a secret meeting on Wednesday at which Kvaerner is thought to have suggested that Amec recommend the offer in return for favourable treatment for the preference shareholders. Under takeover rules, the preference shares cannot be much different from Kvaerner's £1-a-share bid for the ordinary capital. Amec fired its first formal shot against Kvaerner yesterday, detailing why it believes the bid undervalues the UK firm. Amec said shareholders should be aware that Kvaerner is particularly interested in Amec's Process and Energy activities.

Put yourself in Clarke's shoes

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It is a sad day for the City because the change to this sort of system marks formally the beginning of the end of its pre-eminent role in share trading

Stock exchange pushes the City from pole position

One group, at least, will be pleased about the London Stock Exchange's decision to proceed with an order-driven trading system alongside the existing quote-driven one. They are the other European bourses, up until now the also-rans of international share trading, scarcely worth a thought really and certainly no serious threat to the might of the London Exchange. They are all based on order-driven systems too.

Once the London market moves that way it loses its unique, pole position in Europe and just becomes part of the crowd, one of many. You and I could set up an order-driven trading system. All you need is a good computer; most of the European bourses already have one. By moving over to it, the London Exchange is copying the others. Though this may be just bowing to the inevitable - this sort of trading system seems to be what everyone wants these days - it is none the less a sad day for the City for it marks formally the beginning of the end of its pre-eminent role. It will take a good few years yet, but in time it won't matter where you trade - London, Paris, Milan, Frankfurt or even Bombay for that matter.

All of which may make Merrill Lynch, SBC and Dresdner look a little silly. The prices they paid for Smith New Court, Warburg and Kleinwort Benson are suddenly looking rather generous. It is no secret that one of the great attractions of these City firms for their foreign owners was their lucrative market-making businesses. Smith

New Court makes as much as 40 per cent of its money from market making. The quote-driven system is the hallmark of London; those who want to deal have little choice but to go through these powerful middlemen. The advent of order-driven prices alongside the quote-driven ones turns market makers into an endangered species.

The order-driven system dispenses with middlemen, offering the automatic and anonymous matching of buy and sell orders on the screen. If you place the two systems on the same screen for the same stock, as some advocate, the inevitable result will be to squeeze to almost nothing the margins that market makers exploit.

Michael Lawrence, chief executive of the Stock Exchange, hopes this belated revolution will stop the rot and shore up London's position. Will it help. Ironically, it was the unrivalled skills and expertise of the market makers that gave London such an edge over the rest of Europe. The world has moved on, and the Stock Exchange lamentably failed to seize the moment when it should have done several years ago.

Property sector goes to the wall

There was nothing particularly unexpected in the decline in the value of MEPC's net assets per share, but what a depressing picture of Britain's commercial property mar-

ket the figure painted. The upturn in demand and rents at the beginning of last year is beginning to look like a blip in an otherwise relentless downturn of the sector's fortunes.

The property market has three main problems. First, investing institutions who own most of the country's stock of commercial properties are selling more buildings than they are buying. Actually this is nothing new: since the 1960s, when property's attractions as a hedge against inflation and an alternative to equities were first recognised, insurance and pension funds have been steadily reducing their exposure to bricks and mortar. The rate of disinvestment has accelerated recently. New rules and actuarial methods mean that pension funds need to increase their weightings in liquid investments. Property is the most illiquid asset in the best of markets - at the moment it can be completely unsaleable.

The second issue confronting the sector is the malaise afflicting the property agents who broker deals and value portfolios, culminating recently with the receivership of Colliers Erdman Lewis, one of the better known names, and the widespread view that many more firms will go to the wall. Struggling just to survive, no agent is likely to take any risks with a valuation. And with so little agency business available, the temptation for an agent is to cut the price of a building ever lower to try and stimulate trade.

Problem number three is arguably the

most severe and the least well understood. Currently most buildings are valued on the assumption that they will be let on a 25-year lease with no break clauses. This is no longer the case and, with a two-tier market emerging in which many secondary properties will never find tenants again, investors are rightly demanding a greater premium to compensate for the higher risk of shorter lease terms.

All of which leads to the biggest problem of all from the investor's perspective. With capital values and rents in all but the ritziest of new properties in the doldrums, dividends won't grow for years. Little wonder that the sector has underperformed the rest of the stockmarket by more than a third over the past five years.

A £400m kick at the Post Office

If ever there were an argument in favour of privatisation, it is the cynical way ministers bleed the corporate entities they control in an effort to balance the Government's books. The latest victim is the Post Office, which will have nearly £400m whisked away from it in the three financial years from 1996-97.

That is the extra amount of cash the Post Office has been told to pay to the Department of Trade and Industry from its profits, above and beyond the levels it thought

had been agreed a year ago. There is no doubt about the figures. The £260m extra required in the first two years of the three-year period is printed in black and white in the Budget Red Book.

The Government could argue that since the Post Office is a profitable business, a higher dividend for the Exchequer - together with corporation tax - is a perfectly justifiable reward. But it would be disingenuous of it to do so because, in the row that followed Michael Heseltine's decision to abandon Post Office privatisation, serious promises were made about helping the business to invest and compete.

The Post Office understood that to mean its contribution to the Government would be fixed at the then agreed levels, not jacked up by a Chancellor short of money for tax cuts. The management has been urged to use the private finance initiative as an alternative way of raising investment money. This is a notoriously slow and difficult process.

The upshot is that the Post Office is now threatening to cut costs and raise prices to offset the damage inflicted by the Government. Although most of Britain hated the idea, partial Post Office privatisation was never as bad as it was made out. It is a paradox that by behaving in this fashion, ministers only underline the importance of removing large businesses from their control. Perhaps they are kicking the Post Office around to prove the point.



Last lament: A worker outside the Daimler-Benz DASA factory in Munich hammering crucifixes in protest at the loss of 8,800 jobs

Orders boost US rate hopes

DIANE COYLE
Economics Correspondent

A batch of weak economic figures yesterday raised hopes of a fall in US interest rates later this month. The German Bundesbank's decision not to cut its key interest rate did nothing to dent hopes of imminent reductions in Britain and America.

The yield on the benchmark long-term US Treasury bond fell to its lowest for more than two years after reports of a drop in new orders for durable goods and a weaker-than-expected regional manufacturing survey. The dollar surged against the mark, gaining a plennig to reach DM1.4470 at midday.

Many Wall Street analysts see further clashes between President Clinton and Congress as

the only possible obstacle to a move by the Federal Reserve. Its policy committee meets on 19-20 December - just a week after the monthly meeting between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Governor of the Bank of England, also widely expected to lead to a fall in interest rates.

The Bundesbank's Council next meets on 14 December but most analysts now do not expect German rates to fall until the new year. There was a drop in the weekly figures for new unemployment claims in the US. But durable goods orders fell 1 per cent in October after strong gains in the previous two months. There was a decline of 7.4 per cent in non-defence capital orders - a leading indicator for investment spending.

Budget demands threaten rise in price of stamps

RUSSELL HOTTEN

The Post Office is threatening to raise stamp prices and cut more jobs after the Government demanded that the organisation almost double the amount of money it returns to the Treasury.

Mike Heron, the Post Office chairman, said he had protested "very strongly" to ministers about the new cash-back targets, which would wipe out profits and leave little to reinvest in services.

It was revealed in the fine print of Tuesday's Budget that instead of paying £534m in dividends to the Government over the next three years, the Post Office must now pay £925m.

"It makes a rise in postal prices almost inevitable," Mr Heron said. "And we will have to look for £100m in efficiency savings in each of the next three years."

The Government had set an annual dividend from the Post Office at £178m for each of the next three financial years. That had been increased to £298m in 1996/97, and to £317m and £310m in the following two years. The three-year total of almost £1bn is about as much as the Post Office has paid in the last 10 years.

The move sparked a political row, with the Labour Par-

ty accusing the Government of milking the Post Office to pay for tax cuts while putting services at risk.

Mr Heron said he was told of the move last week by Ian Lang, Trade and Industry Secretary, who emphasised the need to reduce public borrowing.

"Now Mr Heron has written to the minister warning that the Post Office would suffer unless it was given greater commercial freedom to compete more effectively. He has set out a detailed list of demands, but declined to reveal them yesterday."

In 1993 the cost of stamps was frozen until March 1996, but the organisation was now likely to raise first and second-class prices by at least 1p to bring in extra revenues of between £130m and £150m.

The Post Office made record profits last year of £472m. On top of paying Treasury dividends, the Post Office paid £110m in corporation tax.

John Roberts, the chief executive, said: "The Government has its job to do and we have ours. We would be failing in our duty to the customer if we did not make clear the implications of these figures."

He recognised that the taxpayer deserved to share in Post Office profits, but said that

the right balance was needed between returning dividends and investing in services. Capital expenditure has been running at between £350m to £400m a year.

Attempts to privatise the Post Office last year were defeated in Parliament and this move suggests that a sell-off is now far down the political agenda.

Michael Heseltine, then trade secretary, had indicated he would try to give the organisation more commercial freedom within government ownership. The fear now is that the increase in government cash demands is a complete reversal of that policy, and the Treasury is intent on using the Post Office as a "piggy bank" to finance tax cuts.

The Post Office has shed about 10,000 jobs in the last four years, and productivity has risen 33 per cent. But Mr Roberts said the increased cash demand would make the organisation increasingly vulnerable to attack from foreign rivals.

Margaret Beckett, shadow trade secretary, said: "The Government are not content with the £35m a day they have taken from North Sea oil and privatisation over the last 16 years. Now they are demanding another £1m a day from the PO."

Cancer drug lifts British Biotech

MAGNUS GRIMMOND

British Biotech saw its stock market value soar £244m to £748m yesterday after the fledgling biotechnology company reported what could be a breakthrough for its new anti-cancer drug, marimastat.

The new oral drug was shown to halt the growth or actually reduce cancerous tumours in a

third of the 94 patients involved in the initial human test programme. The rate of increase in tumours was slowed in a further 26 per cent.

The news prompted the shares to jump £5.05 to £15.48 yesterday, with excited City analysts suggesting that they could hit £20 next year.

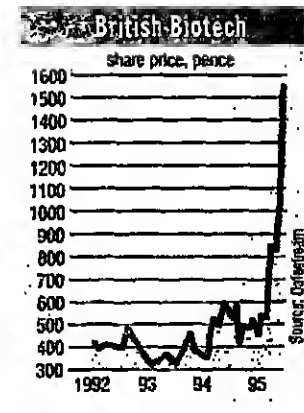
Dr Peter Lewis, British Biotech's head of research and

investment, said: "This is the first evidence from human trials that marimastat may have an effect on the progression of human cancer." However, he said firm conclusions must await completion of clinical testing.

Phase III trials should start in the second half of next year, with analysts pencilling in approval of the drug in Europe and the US by 1999. The latest

results make it virtually certain that holders of British Biotech warrants will now convert into ordinary shares in December and January, raising £47.5m for the company and ensuring its continued survival.

British Biotech announced a £4.03m loss for the three months to October, taking the deficit in the latest half year to £11m from £12.3m before.



Welsh prepares for hostile bid

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

Welsh Water was last night poised for a hostile bid for Swansea, the South Wales electricity company, which yesterday rejected an informal £843m offer.

Welsh Water said the indicative bid was worth 91p but Andrew Walker, chief executive of Swansea, said: "It took us all of five minutes to reject it. It is a low value that is a long way from what the market is pointing to."

He is planning to complain to the Takeover Panel about what he claims is Welsh Water's dithering over the last three weeks.

The shares closed last night at 890p, excluding the value of the company's National Grid stake, which is being given to shareholders.

Grabham Hawker, chief executive of Welsh Water, said the indicative offer, which would include the Swansea plan unveiled yesterday for a special divi-

dend, was worth 945p a share to pension funds, which will receive a tax credit.

He added that Mr Walker, who on Wednesday said a recommended offer must be well above 900p a share, had said during discussions that he would be prepared to recommend a price less than 950p.

Asked whether he was about to launch a hostile bid Mr Hawker said: "We are considering all our options and a hostile bid is obviously one option open to us."

Mr Walker said he would be quite happy to "recommend" an offer that was recommended but criticised Welsh Water for undervaluing the company, which yesterday reported half-year profits of £60.4m before tax, compared with £53.6m a year ago.

Mr Walker announced 100p a share special dividend costing £92m, marking a change from previous plans to hand back cash to shareholders through share buybacks.

Fresh signs of housing revival

NIC CICUTTI

Signs that the decline in the housing market may finally be coming to an end look set to be confirmed today by fresh figures showing a significant rise in property prices last month.

Nationwide Building Society's house price index, published today, is believed to show that the cost of homes rose substantially in November.

Although prices are still lower than 12 months ago, November's rise is likely to be seen as reinforcing the upward pattern established since the end of summer. Nationwide's statistics will come on the same day as official figures from the Bank of England on housing transaction numbers for October.

Ian Shepherdson, UK economist at HSBC Greenwell, said: "I believe they will show an increase in transactions. Many people thought they would fall because of the changes that month in eligibility for benefits when people lost their jobs. This will be on top of rising figures for earlier months. Overall, the quarterly increase will be very substantial compared to the previous three months."

His comments followed the decision by most big lenders, including Halifax, Nationwide, Britannia, Abbey National, Northern Rock and Bradford & Bingley, to cut the cost of home loans by up to 0.4 per cent.

Mr Shepherdson said: "Building societies are behaving as any company ought when faced with a collapse in sales - cut prices. It is hard to see this as anything other than a very powerful signal to the housing market."

NAVITIMER: One Course at a Time. With time a crucial aspect of air travel, pilots and navigators have long viewed their watch as their basic personal instrument. Even with today's sophisticated navigation satellites and radio beacons, "flight computers" like the Navitimer are still used for marine calculations.

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INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

Defence attacks regulators and banks

JOHN WILLCOCK
Financial Correspondent

Kevin Maxwell's defence counsel yesterday slammed government regulators, solicitors, accountants and bankers for failing to stop the "casual movement" of assets around the Maxwell group.

Into, the Government's watchdog for pension funds, had been "totally useless", Kevin's counsel, Alan Jones QC, told the Old Bailey jury.

Robert Maxwell's main banker, NatWest, his auditors, Coopers & Lybrand, and accountants KPMG all came un-



Day 12

bosses using and controlling pension fund assets. "None at all," he stressed.

Kevin Maxwell, the youngest son of Robert Maxwell, had openly admitted the shame he felt for the group's collapse and the responsibility he bore, he said. After his father's death left him at the helm of the ailing empire he never tried to say: "It's all dad's fault. I am giving up. I am going home."

He did not react with bitterness. He did not call in the receivers. Instead he did everything he could to save the group. His efforts had not resulted in any personal gain and he had not

gone around "destroying and shredding evidence," Mr Jones stressed.

But what about the professionals? As long ago as 1988 accountants KPMG knew that Robert Maxwell was using pension fund investments as collateral for his takeover bids. And Coopers & Lybrand had known for a decade that the tycoon was moving assets around his empire, Mr Jones said.

Mr Jones said NatWest could also be criticised as it had encouraged Maxwell's "one-group philosophy" of his empire.

Kevin, his brother Ian, and the former Maxwell finance di-

rector, Larry Trachtenberg, all deny conspiracy to defraud by misuse of pension fund assets. The trial was adjourned to today.

Wednesday's *Independent* quoted Mr Jones as saying that even if Kevin Maxwell been caught with a jemmy and a blowtorch in the vaults of the Bank of England at dead of night "it would prove he had plundered the Mirror pension funds". This should have read "it would not have helped you decide the principle question: who did he and his father consider those shares belonged to?"

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN
Edited by TOM STEVENSON

Hanson drives into a dead-end

The decision not to raise the dividend at Hanson confirmed what has been becoming increasingly obvious of late – that the conglomerate is a spent force, forced into cosmetic changes to convince the City (as Williams, its smaller rival, has had to do) that far from being a sprawling mish-mash of businesses it is actually sharply focused on four clearly defined operations.

The reality of Hanson's plight is that its strategy has been driving it into a cul-de-sac for years. Buying under-performing, basic businesses to slash costs can only ever lead to a grouping of performing basic businesses with unexceptional growth prospects. As the parent grows bigger, it becomes more and more difficult to do deals of a sufficient size to make a difference.

The company put a cheerful gloss on these figures, which superficially were not at all bad. Pre-tax profits, down slightly at £1.28bn (£1.37bn) were put in no unfairly harsh light by a £440m swing in exceptional, one-off charges compared with last year.

At the trading level in the US, Quantum and SCM continued to power ahead, riding the chemicals price cycle. Peabody benefited from the absence of last year's strike and Grove, the crane business, is running fast and still not keeping up with demand.

At home, ARC continues to squeeze better margins out of flat demand. Imperial Tobacco continues to shrug off the relentless decline of its market, rising 6 per cent during the year, and Hanson Brick continues pleasingly.

All that drove operating profits to a record £1.49bn, 35 per cent better than last year after fumes like the coal strike and acquisition profits have been stripped out. Underlying earnings per share, ignoring last year's one-off Beazer Homes profit, were up sharply from 15p to 19.7p. That left the dividend, at 12p, covered safely, if not exactly lavishly. But since the Quantum acquisition, Hanson has become a much more cyclical, volatile earnings stream and a dramatic fall in ethylene prices in the final quarter of the year to September points to the Quantum success running out of steam.

So how best to value Hanson now it has reached the corporate pipe and slippers stage? Now it is talking seriously about selling off non-core but sizeable businesses such as Cavenham or Suhurban Propane, a break-up valuation is pertinent. At between 174p and 226p, according to one broker, that offers little upside from the current 192.5p, unchanged yesterday.

As a quasi-gilt, the current yield of

7.8 per cent is attractive, but with little growth in prospect that is only right and proper. Hanson's shares are worth less now than they were five years ago and although well supported, they are still unattractive.

One for the road at Grand Met

Yesterday's results from Grand Metropolitan were remarkable for a number of reasons. There were no nasty surprises or complicated restructurings; the results themselves were bang on target; and analysts held their forecasts or even upgraded for the current year.

Perhaps this was because these figures were Lord Sheppard's last before he steps down as chairman next March. So much nicer to go out on a steady, upbeat note than a controversial one.

Of course, given the company's record further restructurings, with the usual barrow-load of provisions and restated figures, can never be ruled out. But for now at least the company looks set for a reasonable period of organic growth. Pearle, the opticians business,

will no doubt be sold before long, leaving Grand Met focused on branded food and drink.

Pre-tax profits for the year to September were up 40.7 per cent to £920m, though the underlying profits were 3 per cent lower at £912m. Overall, Pillsbury, the US food business, is doing well while the IDV drinks division and Burger King are suffering from some minor localised difficulties.

Pillsbury, which now includes Pet, the US foods group that was acquired in February, pushed up profits by almost 50 per cent. Burger King is not for sale, the company says, and like-for-like profits increased by a healthy 6 per cent. However, profits dropped from £224m to £196m over the year due to lower franchise sales – which fell from £64m to £30m.

IDV, which includes the Malibu and J&B Scotch brands, is still suffering from the loss of the Absolut vodka franchise. The group hopes to push through a 2 per cent price increase next year though this may be wishful thinking. Rivals such as Guinness and Seagram have been cautious on price recently.

Grant Met shares had a good run this year, up from 355p in January to 442p yesterday, when it climbed

8p. Analysts are forecasting profits of £980m for the current year, which puts the shares on a forward rating of 14. With bid speculation falling away, the shares look no more than a hold.

BPB still faces price worries

BPB's plans to open a new £50m plasterboard plant in Berlin by the middle of next year is a bold move. Despite commanding half the European market for the product, the company failed to hold on to any of the 10 per cent price rise posted in Germany earlier this year.

Although it fared better in the UK and France, the revelation that much of the pain was caused by an aggressive attempt to win back market share by its rival Cypriot Benelux is a worrying reminder of the price war of five years ago.

It is against this apparently unimproving background that BPB is now attempting to push through a new round of price increases. Ranging from 2-3 per cent in France to 12 per cent in the UK, the hope is that the rises will recover some of the margin lost so far this year to higher paper costs.

But this is not the whole story, as yesterday's better than expected interim results demonstrate. Pre-tax profits advanced from £76.1m to £78.9m in the six months to September, an underlying rise of over 13 per cent when a £7.5m loss on sale is stripped out. The dividend goes up 8 per cent to 3.1p.

Mr Cuny argues that things have changed markedly since the early 1990s, when the two major Continental groups Lafarge and Knauf were fighting their way into new markets. And although the slowdown in Germany has hit volumes, growth there and in Austria and Eastern Europe combined was still a healthy 15 per cent in the latest period.

The theory is that the new factory will only make up for the shortfall between current German production and demand. The problem is that others are also adding capacity, not all of which can be absorbed by the admittedly fast-expanding eastern European market.

Full year profits of £181m would put the shares at 317p, up 6p, on a forward rating of 13. Fairly rated until the picture in Germany clears.

Royal Bank in talks to merge American unit

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

The Royal Bank of Scotland announced yesterday it is in talks to merge its subsidiary, Citizens Financial Group, with the Bank of Ireland's First New Hampshire Bank, joining the consolidation wave in the US.

Iain Robertson, managing director of Royal Bank's corporate and institutional banking division, said the deal made sense as the Royal Bank subsidiary and First New Hampshire Bank were both "essentially community neighbourhood banks" and generally the leading or second bank in their respective markets.

Full-year results posted yesterday warmed the City, with a 13 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £602m topping expectations. "The results were helped by lower bad-debt provisions, nonetheless it's a very good increase at the pre-provision level and I don't think anyone will be able to fault that," said Panmure Gordon analyst Tim Clarke. Royal Bank's shares closed yesterday up 10p at 557p.

The announcement on Citizens did not make clear which subsidiary is the driving force behind the merger. "It looks like a continuation of what Citizens have been doing for a long time – making acquisitions – which has been very profitable for them so far," said Mr Clarke.

The Bank of Ireland said a further announcement would be made when discussions were



Easier money: Royal Bank chairman Lord Younger

concluded. The Royal Bank, which has itself been the subject of recent bid speculation as the UK banking and building society sector makes a dash for size, appears to be adopting the opposite strategy from NatWest Group, which is selling its US retail arm, Bancorp. NatWest concluded there is no point in being a small player in a big market and did not wish to commit the resources to build-up.

Net interest income at Royal Bank increased by 11 per cent, or £107m, of which 4 per cent was attributable to acquisitions made by Citizens. Royal Bank said it also saw good volume growth in mortgages and corporate advances. Operating expenses, as expected, were sharply higher, showing growth of 10 per cent.

Royal Bank said these were associated with Citizens and with expansion at its Direct Line Insurance unit and in the domestic branch network. Even then, its cost-to-income ratio improved to 52.2 per cent from 53.2 per cent. The dividend was increased to 16.2p against 13.75p.

Royal Bank said Direct Line's performance was particularly pleasing given the highly competitive market. It showed deteriorating operating margins but reported roughly stable profits from motor and household insurance at £112m, up from £110m.

Lord Younger, Royal Bank's chairman, accompanied the results with a guarded call for an interest rate cut. "Some easing of the monetary stance may be appropriate," he said.

South West to improve supply

RUSSELL HOTTEN

South West Water is bringing forward £7m of capital spending to improve water supplies to areas still suffering restrictions caused by the summer drought.

The company, which yesterday reported interim profits up from £51m to £54m, also said real dividend growth would continue at 3-4 per cent in the foreseeable future.

Thousands of people in South-west England still face water restrictions after the

worst drought for two centuries. About £3.5m was spent in the first half to deal with the shortage and in making payments to customers advised to boil their water to avoid contamination.

The interim dividend rose 7.7 per cent to 9.8p, but the finance director, Ken Hill, said it could not continue at this rate. "We will not be able to match the growth seen at the interim stage from some of the other water companies," he said.

He said any dividend growth would be achieved only through

progress in the group's non-core operations, and the current performance indicated a 3-4 per cent growth rate.

The group's non-core waste management and construction services made operating profits of £2.5m, up 13.6 per cent. The pre-tax figure was a 25 per cent fall to £1.2m due to financing costs related to acquisitions made earlier this year. The performance of the core water businesses was expected to be "pretty flat" in the full year, Mr Hill said.

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2. This designation is for the period of 5 years beginning on 12 November 1995.

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10 November 1995

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IN BRIEF

3i investment returns slow down

3i, Europe's biggest provider of venture capital, has seen a slowdown in smaller company earnings this year. Rising at average rates of 25 per cent as the UK emerged from recession between 1993 and early 1994, profits growth at the companies in which 3i invests decelerated to nearer 15 per cent in the second half of 1994. Despite this, 3i was still able to report a 13 per cent rise in total return to shareholders for the six months to September yesterday. Total return comprised pre-tax profits up from £33m to £42.2m and capital profits more than doubled from £110m to £239m, before currency translation adjustments. Now an investment trust, 3i's net asset value rose from 346p to 390p and the interim dividend goes up 11 per cent to 3.1p.

Lift for Stagecoach

Shares in Stagecoach, the highly acquisitive and often-criticised bus operator, rose 5p to 283p on news of a 43 per cent jump in half-year pre-tax profits to £20.7m. The dividend for the six months to 14 October is being boosted by 27 per cent to 2.1p. Brian Souter, chairman, said he was confident about prospects for the rest of the year, and added that the company expected a February court hearing to challenge the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's enforced sale of its 20 per cent shareholding in Strathclyde Buses and Mainline (Sheffield).

Losses push Tadpole into slide

The share price of Tadpole Technology, the beleaguered manufacturer of notebook computers, dropped 10p to 78p after the company announced post-tax losses of almost £10m in the year to the end of September. Despite the losses, which compared to a profits fall of £1.3m the previous year, the company said yesterday that it still hoped for growth to resume in 1996.

Richard King, Tadpole's chairman, admitted that mistakes had led to the past year's decline in sales to £24m, down from £32.5m in the previous 12 months. These included IBM's withdrawal from selling a Tadpole computer notebook, while marketing projections for other company products were too optimistic, he added.

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Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

A wild night of wax models and actuaries

Madame Tussauds hosted a party for a gaggle of actuaries in the Great Hall last night amid concern for their safety. Some had questioned the wisdom of releasing the students of mortality among waxwork models lest they strike up a conversation with a statue and never be found again.

The bash, catering for 250 guests, was to honour the retirement of David Peacock, senior partner of Lane Clarke & Peacock, the consulting actuaries. As is usual at such events, the merry-makers were subjected to the museum's standard joke.

It amuses the people at Madame Tussauds to set up the drinks table right in front of the models of senior religious figures. Every time guests reach for a glass of wine they must confront the rigidly disapproving countenance of, among others, the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"We enjoy the irony," says the museum's Lucy Robertson. "But it also gives us better access to our kitchens."

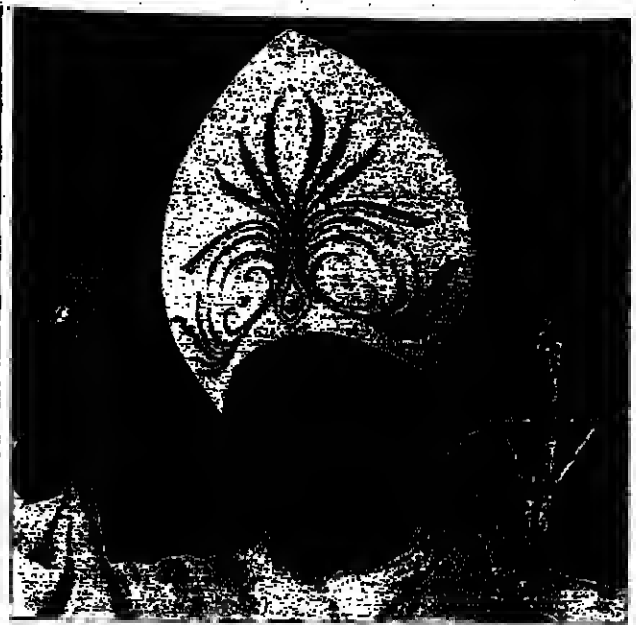
The highlight of the evening was the speech by Martin Slack, the new senior partner. Madame Tussauds had positioned him in front of the models of the Royal family and there was some relief that he did not confess to adultery.

Fears that the actuaries might go wild and damage the exhibits were misplaced. But it does happen. It can cost £25,000 to replace a model, although it is rarely necessary after a corporate bash. "We did once lose a piece of the Dalai Lama's ear," reflects Ms Robertson.

Stephen Jobs, the co-founder of Apple Computer who quit after a bitter struggle for control of the company in 1985, joins that select band who have made \$1bn in just one day.

Shares in his Pixar Animation Studios - which uses computers rather than cameras to make movies - went through the stratosphere on their first day of trading on the US Nasdaq exchange, making the podgy genius worth more than he ever was at Apple.

It was Pixar that made the Disney blockbuster *Toy Story*. Mr Jobs dismissed the windfall with the aplomb of a man who made \$239m at the age of 25. "There's no yacht in my future," he told reporters. "I've never done this job for money."



Master of irony and access to the kitchen

"Oh, and the head of an Irish Prime Minister."

An appalling indictment of the Treasury, which has always preached that manufacturers should keep the lid on inflation by absorbing cost pressures. The cost of the Red Book - a runaway best-seller which chronicles the economic forecasts, tax and spending details of a small island nation - has risen from £15.50 to £17.00. That is four times the rate of inflation that it was predicting in the (much cheaper) edition last year.

Neither is the rise consistent with this year's story. On page 45, the book says "competition remains fierce, as evidenced by recent attempts to end collective agreements in book retailing."

Accountants poring over the fine detail of the Budget have stumbled across the hitherto unreported death of the "red fuel" scam. For those of you without an HGV licence, red fuel (so-called because it contains a marker dye) is the much cheaper off-road diesel that may not be pumped into British fuel tanks willy-nilly. While it works perfectly well in both diesel cars and lorries, HM Customs & Excise takes a dim view of those who seek to run their vehicles on the cheap.

The trick was to take your car or articulated lorry over the border (usually from Northern Ireland to the Republic), fill up with red fuel and drive back. Once in the tank the stuff could not be taxed as road fuel.

Unfortunately the wheeze got out of hand, with red fuel stations springing up within yards of the border. Customs retaliated on 1 August by banning the practice for commercial vehicles. Now the Chancellor has done the same for the private motorist. And any attempt to enter the UK with red diesel will result in seizure of the vehicle, says Customs, adding that "the overall revenue effect of this measure is negligible."

Rail fire sale a recipe for tears

Around 70 per cent of rail passengers will be better served and only a minority - perhaps 30 per cent - will be worse off as a result of privatisation, according to one of the UK's most senior railwaymen. That is a claim of such wonderful ambivalence, damning the privatisation process with the faintest of praise, that it is worth chewing over.

The reasoning behind the claim - unofficial, of course, because these matters are politically charged and public statements are dangerous for careers - is that travellers within identifiable and well travelled routes, especially commuter networks, will gain significantly. They will have the benefit of better and more focused railway management, as the 25 train operating companies are franchised out to the private sector.

But those travelling cross-country on routes passing through more than one franchise area will find their services deteriorating because of the complexities of operating such a fragmented network.

This case cannot be proved one way or another until several years after privatisation, and it appears to be based mainly on gut feeling and experience rather than measurable data. But it is one of a number of claims made recently by railway insiders that buttress the public belief, shared by many MPs, that privatisation will end in tears.

Another suggestion that must have been equally un-

come to Sir George Young, Secretary for Transport, was made this week by a senior but anonymous railway executive speaking to business journalists.

It was that the Government would likely raise little more than a third of the £9bn value of the railway's assets through the sale, and would probably receive only a quarter of the £6bn asset value of Railtrack when the company that owns the railway infrastructure is floated on the stock market next spring.

The main reason put forward was that the Government was pushing the flotation through in too much of a hurry and would not get full value from the City.

This is in fact one of two distinct strands of argument about privatisation that have been interwoven, often confusingly. The first is an objection to the structure of privatisation the Government has chosen, which results in forecasts of poorer service and higher subsidies. The second amounts to saying the privatisation now under way is being badly handled.

Most agree that many peripheral British Rail businesses, including engineering and maintenance workshops, never had any reason to belong to BR, which used to accrue such operations like some out of control and badly managed conglomerate.

The controversy all along

INDUSTRY VIEW
PETER RODGERS

has been about the decision to separate operation of passenger services from ownership of the rolling stock and of the track.

Leaving aside the less controversial freight and parcels operations, the new railway comprises 25 train operating companies (ToCs), three rolling stock leasing companies (Roscos), which own the engines and carriages, and Railtrack. The most powerful of the

Taxpayers and travellers will be left to regret at leisure

many criticisms made of this arrangement is that it will produce a railway of nightmarish complexity, in which subsidies will continue to be pumped in one end and private profits pop out the other.

Unfortunately, while the case against the form of privatisation the Government has chosen reads compellingly, it is yesterday's argument. Legislation to allow the changes has been on the statute book for several years, and the sale process is beginning

to look irreversible, even if there are hiccups from time to time - such as a court challenge next week by the Save our

Railways campaign to the legality of the minimum service standards set by Roger Salmon, the passenger services franchising director, or the row over Resurgence Railways' bid for the Great Western franchise.

Even Labour's opposition to rail privatisation does not go as far as tearing up the whole structure to start again from scratch. That would be tough, since the agreement this month to sell the Roscos for £1.8bn has in one go brought in approaching half the likely privatisation proceeds.

As for the argument that £9bn worth of railway system is being sold for a fraction of its worth, the asset numbers are a red herring. The Government has used a rather arbitrary asset valuation to set the charges to be levied between the various parts of the broken-up railway empire. But the asset figures bear little relation to the way the railways have to be valued as a business.

It is not the discrepancy between asset values and likely sale prices that matters. As with any sale to the private sector, the proceeds will be what the market will pay. This is where the old guard in the railways has a good point.

The timetable of the privatisation

is being driven by politics, because the Government wishes to sell the bulk of the railways well ahead of the election. This is both to bring in the revenues to help with the Budget arithmetic this year and next and to make it hard for a Labour government to reverse the process.

The management of Railtrack, which is now quite separate from British Rail, is keen to see a 100 per cent sale take place well before the election, so there will be less chance of Labour retaking control.

But the sale, if it goes ahead as scheduled between April and June, will be after a mere two full years as a separate company.

Buyers will be well aware of the pressure to sell quickly, and that is a recipe for getting it at a knock-down price. Similarly, the pressure to sell the operating franchises in a hurry is virtually guaranteed to worsen the terms for the Government.

In the bad old days, governments wooed voters with tax giveaways and economic booms, ignoring the inflationary damage because it did not emerge until after the election. Kenneth Clarke seems to have resisted the temptation in this week's Budget.

But the Government is repeating much the same mistake in its privatisation programme, by allowing politics to determine the pace at which it sells the railways. It is taxpayers and travellers who will be left to regret at leisure afterwards.

London International has high hope for new condom

NIGEL COPE

London International, the Durex to Marigold gloves group, expects its Avanti polyurethane condom to capture 10 per cent of the worldwide condom market by the end of the decade, the company said yesterday. The company believes the Avanti brand can grow by between 3-4 per cent a year and grab £50m worth of worldwide sales.

The plastic product is half as thick as latex and is being marketed as a high-quality, high-priced niche product. So far, it is only on sale in 13 western states in the US and has not yet gained regulatory ap-

proval for sale as an approved contraceptive. It is undergoing clinical trials in America, which are expected to be completed next year. This will be followed by a national launch.

In spite of this Avanti is hanging on to its 3 per cent market share where it is sold.

The costs of producing the Avanti brand caused £1.3m of additional costs in the six months to September.

Group pre-tax profits jumped from £1m to £6.5m, boosted by a strong performance from the health and personal products division. Sales of surgical gloves were up by 22 per cent to £26.6m. Sales of household and industrial gloves were up by

11 per cent. The company recently sold the UK and export business of Woodward's grippewater and teething gel for £17.6m. This follows the sale of the photo-processing unit. Other brands are also up for sale. These include Cook Bastes, the American manicure business and Pjantr, the hair-care range primarily sold in Germany.

Net borrowings are down to £44m. The company hopes to use the cash from disposals to fund other acquisitions. The company expects to raise £30m-£50m from future sales. Pamure Gordon, the broker, has left its full-year forecast unchanged at £25m.

Drop in US demand hits Johnson Matthey

JOHN WILLCOCK
Financial Correspondent

Shares in Johnson Matthey, the high-technology precious metals group, fell 7 per cent to 533p after it reported lower than expected first half results due to falling demand for its catalytic converters in the US.

The company suffered from the loss of a contract with General Motors to supply converters, which help clean exhaust fumes. Other US car makers also cut production. The company's first-half pre-tax profit rose 4 per cent to £47m from £45m. Analysts had expected nearly £50m. The dividend also disappointed, rising from 4.2p to

4.4p against forecasts of around 4.6p. The market was forced to cut its full-year forecasts from around £1.13m to £1.03m.

The shares fell from 571p to 528p following the announcement, then recovered to close at 533p.

David Davies, chairman, said three of Johnson Matthey's divisions were performing well, but the drop in the catalytic systems division's profits would continue to restrain progress in the second half. That division suffered a 31 per cent fall in operating profit, he said, while three others did better: precious metals was up by 18 per cent, electronic materials by 27 per cent and Cookson Matthey Ceramics by 66 per cent.

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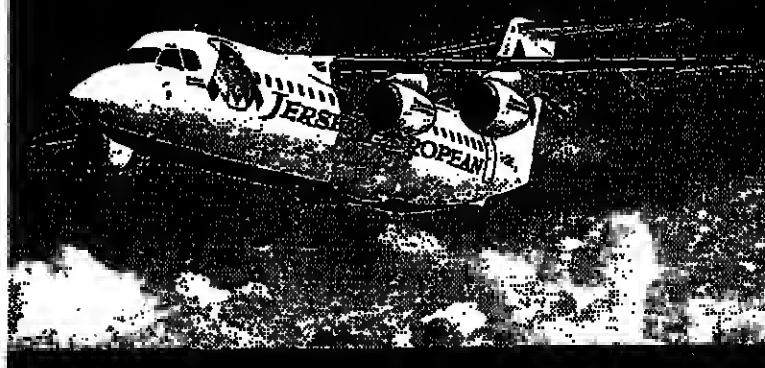
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Qualifying journeys must be completed by 29th February 1996. Travelers can be refunded for travel up to 30th June 1996. Complimentary tickets cannot be used between 26th December 1995 and 4th January 1996 and between 2nd April 1996 and 15th April 1996 inclusive. Travelers must complete a Freedom Ticket form and return it to Jersey European Airways, PO Box 195, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 4JL. Travelers on complimentary tickets must not qualify for further discounts or be issued. Bookings for complimentary tickets must be made through Jersey European Airways. Tickets will be issued by Jersey European Airways. Tickets will be issued by Jersey European Airways. Tickets will be issued by Jersey European Airways.

sport

'It didn't help Damon's reputation that a guy who was an unknown a year ago is now consistently finishing ahead of him, but that's not anyone else's problem but his own. He's paid to do a job, and if he can't handle that job he should go off and do something else'

FACE TO FACE

Ian Stafford talks to David Coulthard about his rapid rise from obscurity to one of Formula One's most coveted drivers

Those catching the 12.05 out of King's Cross last Saturday afternoon were probably oblivious to the fact that a few yards out of the station stands a disused warehouse turned indoor karting track which played host to, amongst others, David Coulthard, pitting his wits against ordinary punters who were bent on beating the guy who finished third in this year's Formula One world championship.

It was, of course, a good fun, and for a while, the children's charity fed by sports stars and events - but for Coulthard, it was a chance to let his hair down after an up and down season that, despite numerous successes, saw him lose his prestigious drive with the Williams-Renault team.

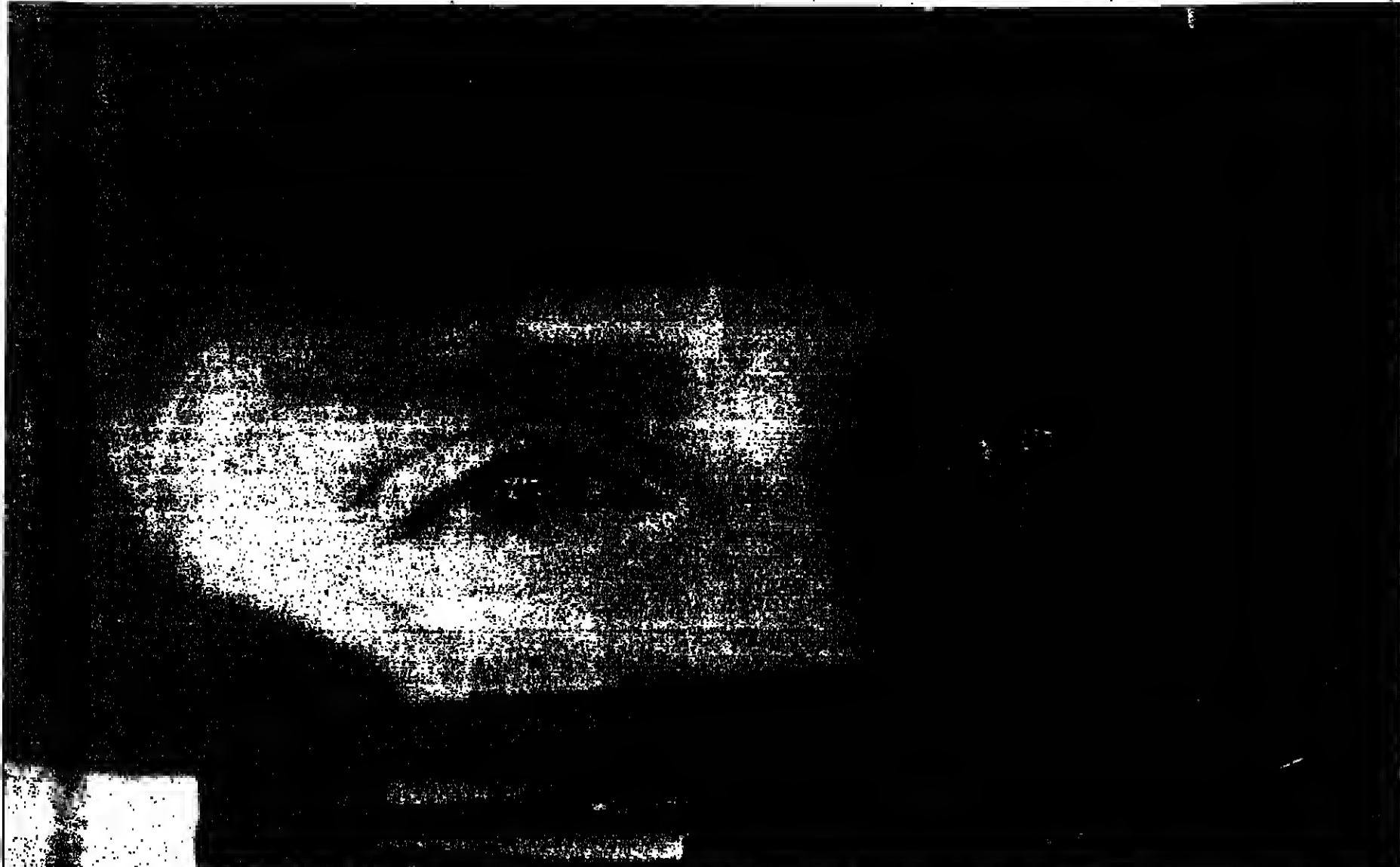
Poor Coulthard. A cracking first grand prix win at Estoril, a host of pole positions and podium placings, and the man is repaid with the ban. Thanks very much, Frank Williams.

Now, that is what you and I might feel, but the man in question is philosophical about his departure from Williams, delighted with his new chance at McLaren and, all in all, rather pleased with the way things finally turned out. If there is one thing he does not want, it is sympathy.

"I'm not bitter, twisted, upset or feel rejected by Williams," he assures you, before taking to the karting track himself. "I don't feel as if I've been jilted and need to find another girlfriend. In fact, until you asked me, I've never even thought about it that way. You see, I'm not an 'I's and a but's' man. I see that as wasted energy."

So spoken by a man whose confidence remains high after a season when he feels he not only came of age, but was also accepted by the other drivers. But it was not like this midway through the year when Coulthard, having pipped Nigel Mansell, of all people, to the Williams drive, failed to deliver.

"Pressure certainly increased during the first half of the season," he admits. "I didn't look like I was going to win a race and, with Mansell winning in Australia at the



The confidence of youth: David Coulthard believes he is a stronger challenger to Michael Schumacher's Formula One title than Damon Hill

Photograph: Allsport

end of last season, I know people were saying that Williams should have plumped for him.

"But the reason I was chosen over Mansell was because he wasn't committed last year. He didn't test for example, after Jerez, before going on to Japan and Australia, and he gave the impression to the team that he'd only give 100 per cent at the races. You need to give more than that."

"When people in Formula One looked at my early results, they were saying: 'It would have been different if it had been Nigel driving the car' and I'm sure Nigel was saying that as well."

It all changed in Portugal. A first grand prix win for Coulthard seemed to unlock the shackles. The man coming with talent and potential finally delivered, and suddenly there was no stopping the young Scot.

"It was more of a relief than anything," he continues, refreshingly frank in his

responses. "I could finally turn to people, like the media and other drivers who felt I didn't deserve such a drive at my age, and say, 'There you are, I know you were a doubter. Here's a grand prize win for you'."

Did he have to endure some serious flak from his fellow drivers?

"Well, I got it from a couple of them. I can't see it through their eyes, but I'd like to think that if the shoe was on the other foot, I'd say: 'I've had my opportunities, so I mustn't knock him. Let's see how he gets on'. But, of course, it's not like that. At least I've proved I'm deserving of a top drive. Don't forget, in the second half of the season, I was clearly quicker than Damon Hill, and scored more points than him."

Sooner or later that name had to crop up. Hill, having lost the world title to Michael Schumacher in 1994 by the narrowest of margins, was supposed to be beating him this year, not looking nervously over his shoulder at a young up-

start, and team-mate, for goodness sake, who was catching him up fast.

It all led to obvious rumours about the relationship between the two Williams drivers fuelled, initially, by a public difference of opinion last year at Spa.

"It was over the most stupid thing and, in this instance, Damon was wrong," is the upstart's verdict. "I mentioned to Damon, on about four occasions, to watch out for Rubens Barrichello at the start of the race, because he was in front of Damon and, through my experiences of racing against him in the lower formulas, I knew that Barrichello had a lot of bad starts. I didn't want Damon to go into the back of him."

"Anyway, he seemed to think I was trying to wind him up and psyche him out before the start of the race. Basically, I don't think he took too kindly to advice from a youngster."

Not a good start to your relationship, then. Did it get any better? "On balance, we had a good working relationship.

From a personal point of view, we don't really know each other, and haven't spent much time together."

"I've never said this before, but if I had a problem with Damon it's the fact that his personality is inconsistent. One day he would be very friendly, the next day he would be quite cold. That made it difficult to know where you stood, and you would either try and guess, or decide not to waste any more time trying to find out."

But surely you can understand that the man was not exactly chuffed when the Williams No 2 driver was challenging him for second place in the World Championship?

"Oh, sure, it didn't help his reputation that a guy who was an unknown a year ago is now consistently finishing ahead of him, but that's not anyone else's problem but his own. He's paid to do a job, and if he can't handle that job he should go off and do something else."

So much for Damon Hill, then. But what about Jacques Villeneuve, the man replacing Coulthard at Williams, who may have won the Indianapolis 500, but is a complete Formula One rookie?

"Well, he hasn't come out of the blue as much as I did. When I arrived, people said: 'Who's that?' Villeneuve is quiet, consistent and mature, and the only thing that will surprise him is the sheer pace of Formula One. Before, you conserve your tyres and let the fuel load come down but now, if it's a two-stop race, it boils down to two sprints. It'll be interesting to see how he fares."

Villeneuve will find himself up against Coulthard's McLaren next season. Even Frank Williams commented, having seen Coulthard beat the pants off Hill, that he might have made an error. Not surprisingly, the 24-year-old agrees.

"I think they've made a big mistake. I'm as much to do with the success of their car as Damon, because I've contributed a lot to the testing and

development of it. But it's not a rejection, it's just business. It's the need to challenge Schumacher, and Williams decided that Damon was a stronger challenger than I was."

"In hindsight, I think that's the wrong decision. I believe I'm a stronger challenger than Damon will be. But I'm still at the start of what I hope will be a long and successful career in Formula One. At the Sakhir stage, I'll be back at Williams. It's just the way it happens. We've parted on good terms and I'll be at their Christmas party, after I've completed my first series of tests with McLaren next week."

McLaren, of course, is one of the great names in motor sport, but the team has found itself consistently outpaced by the likes of Williams, Benetton and Ferrari in recent years. Their lack of competitiveness did not do Britain's Mark Blundell any favours this year, which is why Coulthard takes a philosophical viewpoint about next season.

"Next year, I'll be a better driver, because of the invaluable experience I picked up this season, but whether people will notice this or not is another matter. I'm optimistic about the performance of the new McLaren, which is delivered in January. They have everything that's capable of producing a winning car, and if they don't do it this year, then they will the next."

"I'm a realist though, and I know that if I'm not featuring in the points, people will be saying: 'Remember Coulthard? He used to be on the front grid.' When I go to the first grand prix I probably won't be thinking about pole position, but rather a top-five placing, but we'll all know more once we've tried out the new car."

What Coulthard is clearly looking forward to, though, is a fresh start, with a team who he hopes will treat him like a respected Formula One driver.

"I'd been a test driver at Williams for 18 months before my first grand prix drive for them, so I was the boy who had moved up to becoming a young man, rather than coming straight in as a man. At McLaren, I go straight in as a race driver."

"Also, I will enjoy equal status with Mika Hakkinen (who is expected to make a full recovery from his recent, horrific crash in Australia). Unlike Williams, where Damon always had the use of the spare car, at McLaren it will be down to whoever's doing well in the World Championship."

Not bad for a youngster, who, three years ago, was totally unknown and virtually broke. "When I look back to when I was driving Formula 3,000, and the belief I had that one day I'd make it to Formula One, I must have been crazy. I had to rely on family and friends to pay my rent. I used to live in Milton Keynes - that's how desperate I was."

"But that was then, and I'm not the sort to sit back. I'm looking forward to next season, hope to win at least one grand prix and firmly believe, based on what I've achieved so far, that I now have the ability to one day become world champion."

So when did the desire to become world champion turn into belief? "At Spa last year. That's when I realised that if Damon Hill was a world championship contender, then I could be as well."

A few questions will need to be answered next year by the men who finished in the top three in the World Championship, but in the meantime, it is unlikely that Messrs Schumacher, Hill and Coulthard will be sending Christmas cards to each other.

Time to tackle racial abuse

The game is to consider introducing a charter similar to the one that operates in football, after acknowledging that it has a "small but significant problem" of racism.

A study published yesterday reveals that all black players surveyed had been racially abused by spectators and that almost half of the supporters questioned were aware of abusive chanting.

All professional clubs were urged by the Football Association to take action to tackle racism as places where black players were racially abused. One of Britain's highest-profile black players, the Welsh winger Martin Offiah, recalled incidents of racial abuse from opponents: "More so against Australia."

Dave Hadfield looks at moves to adopt a football-style charter in rugby league

Ikram Butt, until recently the only Asian player in the professional game, said that racial taunts, from players and spectators, had increased as he had become better-known, first with Featherstone and now with the London Broncos.

"Sometimes it is done in a joking sense, but I don't see why I should accept it," said Butt, who has also been in the front line of trying to attract more Asians to play and watch the game.

Neil Tunncliffe, the League's project co-ordinator, said that blacks and Asians were under-

represented on the terraces and had less access to playing opportunities. "We need to make grounds more welcoming environments," he said.

The Wigan and Great Britain captain, Shaun Edwards, argued that abuse of players was a more general problem. "The language coming off the terraces is appalling. If I had children, I'd think twice about taking them to the game," he said. "It's getting worse and so far the Rugby League has turned a blind eye to it."

Edwards believes that better stewarding would help. That,

along with a policy of taking action against players and fans who indulge in racial abuse, is part of the charter that football has adopted.

Many in rugby league are reluctant to accept that a game which has had prominent black players for longer than football or rugby union needs to take similar steps.

The game will now decide whether it needs to follow football's example. "Many clubs already follow the policies of the charter," said Tunncliffe. "It is a matter for the broader governing body of the game whether something should be done across the board, but we would expect clubs to be with us all the way."

Tennis

The game's superpowers do battle for the Davis Cup this weekend, with the United States relying on the power of Pete Sampras after losing the tactical touch of Andre Agassi.

Clay-court specialist Agassi has pulled out of the final against Russia on the red, indoor surface of Moscow's Olympic stadium, although he is expected to turn up to cheer on his colleagues. The 25-year-old from Las Vegas has been suffering from a chest injury since the Americans' 4-1 semi-final win over the champions, Sweden, in September, and may be out of the game until January.

Asked whether the loss of Agassi would affect the US camp, their captain, Tom Gullikson, said: "I think we will do very well. We have a very strong team. We know that both Jim Courier and Pete would have to play the first day. I have got the utmost confidence in both."

Sampras, the world No 1 and champion at Wimbledon and the US Open this year, leads the attack, aiming to bring the Davis Cup to America for the first time in 35 years. Courier, a former No 1 and twice winner of Wimbledon, is the second choice. Agassi, who has his return to clay-court skills as the second singles player.

The doubles provide a combination of serving power from

Todd Martin and experience from Rickie Renberg, a former US Open doubles champion.

The hosts, appearing in their second consecutive final after a tense 3-2 semi-final victory over Germany, will rely heavily on the world No 6, Yevgeny Kafelnikov. The 21-year-old right-hander reached the French Open semi-final and the quarter-finals at Wimbledon and Australia this year. His second singles match against the eighth ranked Courier is expected to be an even-handed affair, pitting two clay-court specialists.

This time, Andrei Cherkasov, 29, is ranked a lowly 90th in the world but has a knack of rising to the occasion for his country. He saved nine match points against Germany's world No 12, Michael Stich, in the deciding match of the semi-final before coming through 14-12 in the final set. Cherkasov has the daunting prospect of meeting Sampras in the first match today, while Kafelnikov will face Andrei Olshovoy in Sunday's doubles.

Much attention has focused on the indoor clay court the home side has opted to use, hoping to blunt the attack of the big left-hander.

Russia were £216,500 for failing to prepare the surface properly for their semi-final against Germany and the opening game was delayed for an hour because the referee decided the court was dangerous after it had been overwatered.

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JUST THE TICKET: a weekly guide to what's on where for the sporting spectator

PICK OF THE DAY

SATURDAY / Cross-country European championships

Alnwick

Great Britain finished fourth in the men's European championship last year and hope to go at least one better tomorrow in the grounds of Alnwick Castle, Northumberland. All eyes, though, will be on Paulo Guerra, the 25-year-old Portuguese who is looking to repeat his runaway victory of 1994. Guerra has established himself as the leading European in this discipline, having finished sixth in this year's World Championship at Durham in March. The women's race is particularly exciting, with Fernanda Ribeiro, the world 10,000 metres champion, pitted against Annemari Sandell, the Swedish world junior cross-country champion. The Portuguese runner led in the early stages but faded to sixth behind the winner, Catharina McKenney, who is not defending. Julia Vazquez, the Spaniard who lost by one second last year, also runs. How to get there: Alnwick, Northumberland, is off A1. The women's race is at 1.15pm, followed by the men at 2pm.

This weekend

TODAY

RUGBY LEAGUE: Staines Centenary Challenge

Bradford v Oldham (7.30)

DAIRY: Wymondley World Masters

Chorley v Wigan (10.00)

Chorley v Wigan (10.00)

Chorley v Wigan (10.00)

Chorley v Wigan (10.00)

Chorley v Wigan (10.00)

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Chorley v Wigan (10.00)

the men's under-23 title, vacated by Mark Chalmers, a member of Britain's world team.

The first and second rounds are today at noon and 2pm, respectively, and semi-finals start at 1.30pm and 4.00pm, with Sunday's final starting at 1.00pm. Spectators in the Staines Sports Club, The Park, is charged from 10.00 to 12.00, £2.50 for both days. Thames Valley Sports Centre Park, International Hotel, 47 Little Road, Fulham, London SW6, is close to West Hampstead tube station (closed at weekend) and Epsom Court (closed at weekend). Tel: 0171 385 1255.

WOLVERHAMPTON: The British Open

Wolverhampton v Wigan (10.00)

Wolverhampton v Wigan (10.00)

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Wolverhampton v Wigan (10.00)

Wolverhampton v Wigan (10.00)

SUNDAY

FOOTBALL: FA Cup Second Round

Wolverhampton v Wigan (10.00)

Wolverhampton v Wigan (10.00)

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But the FA do have a wide responsibility. They are right to note that Venables is yet to be found guilty of anything, but the whole affair does little for the image of the game.

The overall effect is rather like watching Venables' middle-aged, harassing the opposition to win the half. None of them, by themselves, can win it, but collectively they can. The worry is that, eventually, one of Venables' court cases will dispose of him.

J. E. H.

SPORT

Starting next week: a bright new sports section every Monday

SECOND TEST: England ignore local advice and pay early price for choosing to bowl but late run of success rescues decision

Indefatigable Cork leads the fightback

MARTIN JOHNSON
reports from Johannesburg
South Africa 278-7 v England

The consultant groundsman here is the former Derbyshire player Ashley Harvey-Walker, and, as someone who once banded his false teeth to the square-leg umpire on a particularly nasty piece of turf at Buxton, he knows a thing or two about dodgy pitches.

Yesterday, cooking a not very clever deaf 'un to Harvey-Walker's bat-first advice, England themselves came armed to the false teeth with four seam bowlers, and can count themselves extremely fortunate that they are not already out of this Test match.

With just over half a session to go, South Africa were 211 for 2 on a pretty oar perfect

batting pitch, but five more wickets as the shadows lengthened across the Wanderers spared England what was threatening to be a highly embarrassing first-day post-mortem. As it is, the home team's 278 for 7 leaves the match just about evenly balanced.

Apart from ignoring the groundstaff, neither did England appear to be aware of an old cricketing proverb in these parts: if you win the toss, don't look at the pitch, look at the sky. After the kind of weather which made you wonder why Johannesburg was not twinned with Venice, yesterday dawned a good deal brighter than of late - and a good deal brighter than Michael Atherton's decision to insert the opposition for only the second time in his 26 Tests as captain.

Much more hearteningly, England's fightback came from

combination of a cricket team which has learned how to guts it out in a crisis, and a bowler in Dominic Cork who has an increasing ability to pull rabbits from hats. Cork has a picture of Ian Botham on his mantlepiece at home, but it is almost getting to the stage when it ought to be the other way around.

There was rarely a time when Cork did not have the ball in his hand yesterday, although having viewed the efforts of his other bowlers, Atherton did not need much persuading when Cork was busy pool-pooling the idea of taking a breather.

Having taken the first two wickets before lunch, Cork picked up two more with the second new ball, and with England having gambled on Devon Malcolm in preference to Richard Illingworth, Malcolm finally repaid their faith with two late wickets of his own.

It was a curious start to the day, in that Malcolm began with three maiden overs. "Malcolm is coming on from the golf course end," boomed the announcer, which appeared to be a recipe for a series of books and slices and frantic cries of "fore", but it was Darroo Gough who was all over the place in the early stages, spanked for 21 off his first three overs.

Before then, however, Cork had dismissed Andrew Hudson for a seven over duck in a way which once again emphasised his propensity for the unusual. As Cork and the entire spin cordon, screamed for an lbw



Head down for Hansie: Cronje departs for the pavilion as Robin Smith leaps to congratulate Dominic Cork

Photograph: R. H. H.

decision, the ball floated to Alec Stewart in the gully, and Hudson was given out caught off bat and pad.

It was Cork again who removed the dangerous looking Hansie Cronje just before lunch, caught behind off a good away swinger, but in the afternoon session, Gary Kirsten and Daryll Cullinan clocked up 110 more runs without being parted.

The fact that they should have been parted reduced Gough to something close to apoplexy during a spell in which he four times found the

onside edge of Cullinan's bat, and all he had to show for it were three fours and a dropped catch from Jack Russell. The wicketkeeper got both hands to the ball - as did Gough to his head as he sank to his knees in frustration.

Russell made belated amends when Cullinan's thin edge off Graeme Hick ended a partnership of 137 in 42 overs, but the left-handed Kirsten went on to complete his maiden Test century in his 29th innings.

The fact that most of his runs either came from leg-side glides or fierce off-drives was a fair

indication of England's inability to bowl on one side of the wicket. Another pointer to the sort of day England were having was the number of times the ball came towards their least athletic fielder, and Angus Fraser hauling himself back to his feet to rub dirt off his flannels proved to be one of the day's more common sights.

However, all this changed after tea, beginning with a hopeless stroke by Jonty Rhodes at an innocuous ball from Cork. Rhodes' presence in this team represents one of

South Africa's keener sporting

debates, and the odds on him still being in the side by the end of this series are pretty long.

When England took the second new ball, they would probably have settled for getting Kirsten, caught behind to a tired prod at Malcolm, who by this time had reverted from his unfamiliar economy model to the more recognisable mixture of occasionally stunning pace, and even more stunning inaccuracy.

David Richardson provided Malcolm with his second wicket in four balls with an eyes-closed flinch that resulted in a

ballooned catch off the bat handle. McMillan's wicket ended in the first of the day when Cork

almost completely missed the opening day of the Test. This time, South Africa picked the game's only wicket here as England were in Pretoria, England were up with both team halves yesterday, but if the weather holds, it will be fascinating to see if they get away with it.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2846, Friday 1 December By Spunnie Thursday's Solution

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ACROSS

- Reject material presented to university by London school (7)
- Justify printing in French of scurrilous verse (7)
- So missing schoolgirl sounded distraught? Could be ostracism (4-11)
- Not up to a qualification in education (4)
- Like a movie that's somewhat dirty? (5)
- Container for liquids used by brewer (4)
- Car which reverses in silence is of least value (7)
- Simple bridge system, yet problematic for one of the lower orders? (7)
- A point spurned by Unionist as unrealistic (7)
- Place to reside for a bit in Derby, maybe? (7)
- Force a way into British base (4)
- Understands man's been abandoned by the legal profession (5)
- Shock as announcement finally appears in paper (4)
- God-forsaken outpost taken in by artist's whirlwind jaunt (7-4, 4)
- Information path where you'll find German article about prohibition (7)
- Defendant condemned after juror's finally withdrawn (7)

DOWN

- Recover by miracle, perhaps? (7)
- His study's very antiquated (15)
- Painful cut for city's hospital (4)
- Number one priority (7)
- Detective inspector keen with novel problem (7)
- Children spend time with duke (4)
- Places for boarders joining either of two classes (7, 8)
- Warning by opponent not without point (2, 5)
- Communication system involves one in climbing tree (1-4)
- Name of man who's with Bill? (5)
- Not daunted by implication of *pizzicato* instruction? (7)
- Novelty causing cyst to come up on top of head (7)
- Drink drunk before meal? (4, 3)
- Nurse applied to Yorkshire Water - given a secure job (7)
- Run through son's bill (4)
- Private investigator probing financial centre - it's a long story (4)

DTI proceedings 'will not affect Venables during championships'

Football
DAVID HELLIER

Terry Venables' solicitor, Ian Burton, said yesterday that the England coach's preparation for the European Championship this summer would not be affected by the Department of Trade and Industry's decision to start proceedings to disqualify him as a director.

Burton said any bearing against the England coach was unlikely to be heard fully until the autumn of next year or the beginning of 1997. "Anything that may happen before then, including preparatory hearings, will not require Mr Venables to spend any time with me, or in court," Burton said.

His comments came after taking advice from the Treasury Solicitor to Venables a few days ago informing of the disqualification proceedings and the decision not to prosecute him with criminal offences.

The Football Association yesterday remained faithful to the England coach in spite of the latest controversy over his business dealings. "The position remains unchanged. He remains as coach of the England football team," a spokesman said.

Following an 18-month in-

vestigation, the DTI informed Venables that disqualification proceedings are to start against him in connection with his directorship of Scribes West, Edennote, a company now in liquidation, Tottenham Hotspur and Tottenham Hotspur Football and Athletic Club.

The DTI declined to comment yesterday, even as to the existence of an inquiry, although its officers sent letters to Venables and his associate, Eddie Ashby, in the past few days.

One of the letters, from Andrew Leithead, the assistant treasury solicitor, to Venables, contains the following: "It appears to the Secretary of State that your conduct as a director of the above named companies



Venables: DTI inquiry

makes you unfit to be considered in the management of a company and that it is expedient in the public interest that a disqualification order should be made against you."

Another letter, however, clears Venables of any criminal offences. "On the basis of the information presently available to us, the DTI does not propose to bring proceedings against you in connection with criminal offences under section 447 of the Financial Services Act 1986 concerning Edennote, Tottenham Hotspur plc and Tottenham Hotspur Football and Athletic Club and in connection with offences of Aiding and Abetting under section 11 of the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 concerning Scribes West Ltd, Tottenham Hotspur and Tottenham Hotspur Football and Athletic Club."

If the DTI's disqualification action is successful, Venables could be barred from being a director for up to 15 years. It is believed the allegations against him in relation to Tottenham relate to payments made to agents in breach of Football League rules. In relation to Scribes West, the charges are believed to relate to trading when the company was insolvent, although yesterday it was pointed out that he invested £500,000

of his own money in the company. The charge in relation to Edennote is believed to concern wrongful accounting.

Venables denies all charges and said yesterday that he would await with interest to see whether any prosecutions might follow against past or present directors at Tottenham. "There have been various offences in relation to Football League regulations which have been highly publicised, many of which must also be breaches of other regulatory bodies. I find it very hard to understand why I am singled out in regard to matters concerning Tottenham," he said. Tottenham have already been fined £1.5m as a result of making £500,000 unrecoverable loans to players and as a result of being involved in three questionable transfer transactions.

Venables' close business associate, Eddie Ashby, has been informed that he is to be pursued for potential criminal offences relating to his alleged part in the management of three companies, Scribes West and the two Tottenham companies, while being an undischarged bankrupt.

Ashby, who intends to fight the charges in court, said yesterday that from late August 1991 until his departure in May 1993 the Tottenham board was aware of his bankruptcy and that in September 1992, his appointment was reaffirmed in front of the company's creditors. Venables' legal misadventure, page 31

Barwell's £1m bid for Saints

Rugby Union

Keith Barwell, a millionaire businessman, has launched a £1m bid to buy Northampton with the promise of more money to come. The runaway Courage League Second Division leaders' 2,500 members will be asked at an extraordinary general meeting on 10 December to support the takeover.

Barwell already has the support of the club captain, Tim Rodber, the director of rugby, Ian McGeechan, and the committee, most of whom were involved in the 1988 revolution which swept the old guard out of power.

"I have given the club certain assurances that they will have the right to buy back the controlling interest of the club," Barwell said.

"In the future I do see additional sums of money being required. They will be available. I believe this is the final brick in the wall which makes us very, very powerful."

The Saints are the latest club to be offered financial help in the game's new professional era. Saracens, the First Division club, were last month boosted by a £2.5m injection from a local businessman and Sir John Hall has pumped millions of pounds into Second Division Newcastle.

Newcastle may face play-off, page 31

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